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ABSTRACT

This 1984 report by the National Association of Secondary School Principals is based on a survey of 1,500 students from grades 7 through 12 selected by means of a probability sample by National Family Opinions, Inc. The report compares today's students with those surveyed in a similar study in 1974. Chapter 1, "Students and Their Schools," includes sections on teachers, grades and homework, the classroom, school discipline, courses, principals, guidance counselors, and three student activities (school sports, music, and student councils). Chapter 2, "After the Dismissal Bell," contains discussions of working students, community service and non-school organizations, and such leisure activities as sports, video games and computers, and television. Chapter 3, "The Homefront," focuses on students' relationships with their parents, family communications, and student attitudes in relation to parent attitudes. In chapter 4, "Politics and Values," what students consider to be bad influences and important world and national problems, as well as their views on American government and politics, national service, religious practices, social issues, criminal justice, education, and moral issues are examined. Chapter 5, "Future Moves," concludes the report by recording students' post-high school plans, including preferred careers, salary expectations, and plans for marriage and children. (JEM)

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Foreword

The Mood of American Youth is one of the most comprehensive studies on high school students ever undertaken. In this report, students in grades 7 through 12 speak out on the people, institutions, and issues which are shaping their lives. From religion to rock music, classrooms to careers, this national survey explores the ideas, beliefs, and aspirations of America's youth.

Based on an extensive survey of 1,500 students, this report also compares the attitudes of today's young people with those of their 1974 counterparts. A *Mood of American Youth* survey conducted 10 years ago serves as the basis for examining the differences and similarities among students of the so-called "me generation" in the '70s and the adolescents of the '80s' "information age."

The survey, based on a probability sample by National Family Opinions, Inc., polled students selected from households that are representative of the national population in geographic distribution, population density, and family income. Quotas were established to ensure an appropriate representation of male and female respondents.

A total of 87 percent of the students responding to the survey were enrolled in public schools. Eleven percent of the students attended private schools with religious affiliations, and the remaining 2 percent went to nonsectarian private schools.

Today's youth have much to tell us about their hopes and plans as well as their daily joys, gripes, and worries. In this report, students reveal many of their commonly shared attitudes and beliefs, frustrations and priorities. By recording these student voices, *The Mood of American Youth* hopes to assist all those who care about and serve children to have a better understanding of our nation's young people.

Terry Giroux
Director
NASSP Division of Student Activities

Introduction

If information is the product of an exchange of views, then greater understanding is the windfall profit. *The Mood of American Youth* affords readers the opportunity for this special dividend. It provides a broad perspective on the attitudes and character of secondary school students today.

The current generation of young people have much to say about their world, but unlike students of the early 1970s, these teenagers speak carefully, almost cautiously. They don't indulge in slogans and shouts. Persons interested in understanding the collective voice of today's students, therefore, will need to focus attentively upon points of view and not upon passions.

In this comprehensive national survey of American youth, students examine their schools, future plans, teachers, political inclinations, parents, fears, and pastimes. They exhibit less of the self-centeredness which characterized the 1970s' teen population. The ever-challenging and critical posture of the early 1970s' youth has all but vanished, as well. The 1980s' adolescents do possess definite opinions about their future careers. They also show a strong desire for traditional home and family life.

Today's students generally give high marks to their schools, teachers, and administrators. Yet, education is not afforded unquestioning acceptance. For example, the students identify characteristics of their "best" teachers but also describe shortcomings in curricula. They describe irritating homework and stimulating instruction.

Youth today face innovations and developments which were not a part of the public scene 10 short years ago. They find video games entertaining, but not particularly significant. "New wave" music has captured many teenage fans, but rock remains the constant favorite. Computer-related careers surpass all other occupations as the students' top job choice.

Students listen to the radio three hours a day, watch television for another three, and spend *less than four hours a week* studying at home. Yet, they cite reading as their second "special interest." In 1974, students

read less than one book a month, including school assignments. Today, teenagers read an average of two books for their own enjoyment every month and start a third.

Underlying all views, the 1983 students possess an abiding respect for their parents, a strong desire to pursue postsecondary education, and a growing confidence in their government.

The youth of America hold important opinions. For persons attentive to these views, the young people of the eighties offer a detailed profile of themselves. They also suggest some useful directions for adults who wish to better understand and assist them to grow into full adulthood.

Scott D. Thomson
Executive Director
NASSP

Chapter 1

Students and Their Schools

Education Gets Above Average Marks

Amid an intensifying national debate about the quality of education in the United States, students themselves appear relatively satisfied with their schools.

In recent months, a spate of commissions, task groups, and research teams have issued dire warnings about the current state of education. The nation faces "a rising tide of mediocrity," reported the National Commission on Excellence in Education. "A real emergency is upon us" to improve schools, concluded the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth. "The nation is failing to provide its own children with the intellectual tools needed for the 21st century," said the National Science Board Commission.

In direct contrast to this apparent widespread alarm about education, secondary students overwhelmingly indicated that *their* schools were doing a better than average job. When asked to assign a letter grade to their schools' performance, nearly 75 percent of the students surveyed gave their schools an *A* or *B*. Fewer than 5 percent of the students graded their schools *D* or *F*. Based on a scale of four points, with a rating of 3.5 to 4.0 equal to an *A*, the overall average grade for American schools was 2.95--a solid *B*.

The students' scoring of their schools varies considerably with the adults' assessment of their communities' schools. Only 31 percent of the persons surveyed in the 1983 Gallup Poll on Education awarded an *A* or *B* rating to their local schools. (When rating the nation's schools as a whole, the Gallup respondents gave schools even lower marks; only 19 percent awarded *A*s and *B*s). While the Gallup Poll measures attitudes only on *public* education and the students surveyed for the *Mood of American Youth* included 13 percent from private schools, the discrepancy between the adult and student ratings of schools seems too large to be explained entirely by this sampling difference.

Furthermore, students' satisfaction with their schools appears to have held fairly constant over the last decade. In 1974, more than 77

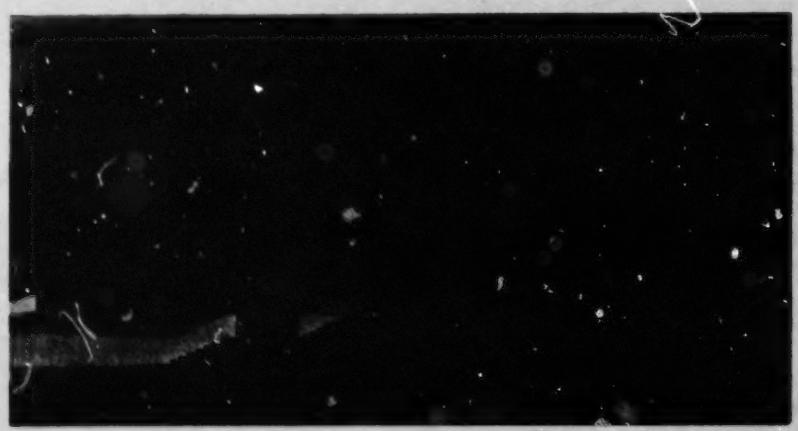
percent of the students surveyed indicated their schools were "doing a good job" in educating them. This compares favorably with the 75 percent of 1983 students who give their schools a rating of *B* or better.

On the other hand, adults' perception of schools, at least of public schools, has diminished in the last nine years. The 1974 Gallup Poll reported that 48 percent of the adults surveyed gave the public schools an *A* or *B* rating—17 percent more than gave such marks in 1983.

Why would adults and students give their local schools such different report cards? One explanation may be that the adults based their assessments primarily on their views of how well the schools were preparing students academically and on their perceptions of young people in general, while students made their ratings based not only on academic considerations but on the social aspects of their schools as well.

For example, when asked why they liked school, the students ranked "learning" a distant third behind "friends" and "sports." Even students who reported making "mostly *A*s" cited "friends" and "sports" above "learning" as their reasons for liking school. Students earning "mostly *B*s" listed "learning" fourth in their list of reasons for liking schools, behind "friends," "sports," and "social activities."

Although the students' ratings of their schools may have been influenced by their social life and cocurricular activities at school, why students like school should not be confused with students' views of how well their schools are doing. The *A*s and *B*s they gave their schools were not merely a reflection of some preoccupation with the nonacademic side of schooling; students who gave their schools high marks also indicated that on the whole, their schools were innovative, had few discipline problems, used a variety of teaching methods, and had well-qualified teachers. Conversely, students who ranked the quality of their schools with a grade of *C* or below, reported their schools had less competent teachers, more discipline problems, and a more rigid approach to instruction.



Reasons for Liking School

Reasons	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Friends	71.9	71.0	72.6
2. Sports	31.2	37.0	26.2
3. Learning	17.1	16.0	18.1
4. Social Activities	16.0	9.1	22.0
5. Teachers	15.1	13.8	16.2
6. Classes	10.2	8.9	11.4
7. Cocurricular Activities	7.3	8.2	6.6
8. Other Things	9.7	12.0	7.7

The Teachers

Central to the blossoming national discussion about the quality of education is the issue of teacher competency. While students may not possess the impartiality or knowledge to objectively judge their teachers' qualifications or expertise, they do offer some valuable insights into how students view "good" and "bad" teaching.

Although many of the recent national reports on education have put out the call for better-trained teachers, more than 70 percent of the students indicated their teachers are "competent in their subject areas" and almost 80 percent agreed that "most of (their) teachers are up-to-date in their ideas and actions."

However, students apparently cannot or choose not to assess their teachers' abilities based on the amount of knowledge they perceive their teachers as having or lacking. When asked to list the characteristics of their best teachers, students identify "explaining things clearly," "spending time to help students," and "having a sense of humor" as the top considerations. "Teachers' knowledge of their subjects" ranked seventh on the students' list of traits of their "best" teachers. So while 70 percent of the students judged their teachers "competent in their subject areas," only 15.7 percent of the students reported this as a factor in deeming a teacher "best."

More than a third of the students listed "clear explanations" and "spends time with students" as a characteristic of their best teachers. About one-fourth mentioned that their best teachers were either "fun" or "funny." Other characteristics of their best teachers, students reported, included being considerate of students' feelings, making the class interesting, and relating well to students. About 20 percent of the students pointed out these as traits in their best teachers.

Apparently, the students' estimations of what makes the best teachers have not changed much in the last decade. In the 1974 *Mood of American Youth*, students most frequently cited "an ability to relate to students," "a desire to help students," and "a pleasant personality" as the traits of their best teachers.

Likewise, these ideas about what constitutes a "best teacher" vary little among students who attend public school and those who go to

private schools. Regardless of their age, their families' income, or the part of the country in which they live, students ascribe the same characteristics to their best teachers.

From the students' viewpoint, a teacher's attitude toward students and manner of presenting classwork seem to be more important than the actual "book learning" that a teacher possesses. Of course, this may be because students, due to their own limited knowledge about their course matter, are unable to tell if their teachers are well-qualified in their subject areas. Nevertheless, in seeking to improve the quality of teaching and teacher training, students would urge that the ability to communicate with young people, and a warm, amiable rapport should remain high on the list of teaching prerequisites.

Their "worst" teachers, the students reported, are almost mirror images of their best ones. For students in 1983, just as was the case for 1974 students, the worst teachers "don't explain things clearly," "don't show any concern for students," and have "poor or unfriendly attitudes." Only 1 student in 10 mentioned "not knowing the subject matter" as a characteristic of their worst teacher.

Female and male students differed somewhat in their views on what characteristics identify their worst teachers. Females were more likely than males to report that their worst teachers didn't explain things clearly or didn't relate well to students, while males cited being "uncaring or mean" and "giving too much homework" as the traits of their worst teachers more frequently than did the females.

Characteristics of Worst Teachers

Characteristics	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Did Not Explain Clearly	28.9	24.1	33.1
2. Not Caring/Mean	18.2	20.3	16.2
3. Poor Attitude/Unfriendly	15.7	14.9	16.4
4. Dull/Boring Class	15.5	13.6	17.2
5. Did Not Relate to Students	14.8	10.7	18.3
6. Favored Certain Students	14.1	13.6	14.5
7. No Help/Individual Attention	13.7	12.7	14.6
8. Too Much Homework	13.1	15.4	11.2
9. Too Strict	11.0	12.3	9.8
10. Did Not Know Subject	10.9	9.8	11.8
11. Unfair Grading System	9.9	8.2	11.4
12. Lacked Control	9.1	7.4	10.6
13. Expected Too Much	7.5	6.5	8.5
14. Embarrassed People	7.0	4.2	9.4
15. Raised Voice Often	6.3	5.4	7.1
16. Did Not Listen	5.4	3.6	6.9

Grades and Homework

Grading systems and policies, once an area of student protest in the late 1960s, seems to have vanished as a major issue among students.

Both the 1974 and 1983 youth surveys revealed that relatively few students were disgruntled about grading practices. Nearly three-quarters of the students surveyed in 1983 agreed that their present grading systems were satisfactory.

Another indication that grading policies have lost favor as a cause célèbre is the students' infrequent mention of grades in describing their "best" and "worst" teachers. Among the characteristics of "best" teachers, "fair grading" ranked twelfth. "Unfair grading" ranked eleventh among the traits of "worst" teachers. Student demands for abolishing grades or adopting only "pass or fail" report cards fell silent after the 1960s and remain dormant with today's young people.

Homework, on the other hand, has received much renewed interest recently—both from students and educators. The National Commission on Excellence in Education, in calling for teachers "to assign far more homework," reported that two-thirds of high school seniors have less than one hour of homework a night. Students bear out the commission's findings: 60 percent of secondary students reported they spend eight hours or less each week studying or doing schoolwork. Therefore, including the weekends, study time for students in grades 7 to 12 averages less than one hour and 10 minutes a day.

Not surprisingly, students' grades and the amount of study time go hand-in-hand. Students making mostly *A*s reported studying about 10 hours a week, two hours more than the average. Students making mostly *D*s spend about four hours less than the average; thus, the *D* students are spending less than four hours a week on classwork outside of school hours. Additionally, the students' self-reports on study habits show that females spend, on the average, about an hour more a week on homework than do males.

Each of these average study times did not vary among students in different grades, in different parts of the country, or in different size cities. Also, the amount of time devoted to schoolwork at home did not

differ among students attending public schools and those enrolled in private schools.

However, in the highest rated schools (those that the students gave either an *A* or a *B*), students reported receiving an average of almost two hours a week more homework than did students in the schools with *C*, *D*, or *F* ratings.

Even though, by their own admission, most students spend only about an hour a day studying, almost a third of the students said their teachers "require too much work outside of the regular class period." Another third of the students indicated the amount of homework was not unreasonable, with the remaining third offering no opinion.

The students who are complaining about homework may be concerned more about the quality of home assignments than the quantity. However, even the suggestions for less homework were often accompanied by modifiers such as "less homework *for homework's sake*," or "less *busy* work" (emphasis added). In some cases, these remarks may mean the students do not perceive the relationship between their assignments and classroom learning. In other instances, the homework, indeed, may be superfluous. In either event, a great many students seem to feel that teachers need to clarify the connections between homework and classwork.

The Classroom

The boisterous student clamorings for educational "relevance" so prevalent in the 1960s took the form of demands for courses in black history or women's studies, for greater student decision making in education, and for less formal classroom structures. Such issues were not major concerns of the students in the 1970s, and apparently are not high on the 1980s student agenda either. However, a quieter version of the same issue is evident. The students of the two later decades do agree that their classes should include more student participation and discussion.

Although 70 percent of students in 1983 report that their teachers use a combination of lectures and discussion, "more discussion" was the top-ranked suggestion for improving teaching methods. Likewise, the 1974 students said increasing the amount of classroom discussions was their first priority in changing classroom operations.

Interestingly, the 1983 students who gave their schools above average marks reported significantly less straight lecturing in their classes than did students who rated their schools with a *C* or below. Private and public school teachers, according to the student reports, use lectures and discussion techniques with equal frequency.

Related to the suggestions for more classroom discussions, was the students' second most frequently mentioned area of needed improvement: "more exciting and interesting classes." This recommendation, like the call for more student participation in classes, may indicate that

the desire for relevance in courses has not vanished, but has been restated in less demanding terms.

The "relevance" cry was an amorphous issue in the '60s; a similar longing by students in the '80s is no easier to pinpoint and act upon. However, students now, like those of 20 years ago, do appear to be sensitive to and in search of concrete ways to relate their classroom studies directly to their present and future lives.

Although "more individualized student instruction" was a fairly common suggestion for improving classroom practices (it ranked eighth on a list of 23 recommendations), most students felt teachers are providing adequate individual attention to their students who need it. About half of the students reported that they usually receive such personal attention from their teachers when they need it. Another 40 percent said their teachers provided individualized instruction "sometimes." Only 10 percent said they "rarely" received such assistance.

However, the teachers' individualized instruction time seems to differ according to the students' academic success. A total of 65 percent of the students who reported receiving *A*s and *B*s said they usually received the special instruction they need; only 36 percent of the *C* students reported they usually received such instruction. This difference may be attributed to the possibility that academically successful students are more likely to request this individual help from their teachers, and therefore, they receive such assistance more often. Another possible explanation is that teachers may tend to spend more time with those students who already have a record of success and who may appear most likely to benefit from the teachers' special efforts.

Overall, the students' suggestions for altering the teaching methods they receive are relatively minor changes. This phenomenon mirrors that of the 1974 student survey. While youngsters may wish for and suggest small changes in the way they are being taught, they share no single dogged demand for educational improvement nor do they appear to see themselves and school personnel as an "us against them" situa-

tion, as was once the case during the social turbulence of the 1960s.

In fact, a full 75 percent of the students surveyed felt their schools were, on the whole, willing to try new approaches and were flexible to change. Students in both private and public schools share this perception of their schools' adaptability. Similarly, the students in the 1974 survey also reported that their schools were willing to try new approaches.

During the last nine years, a baseline of student confidence in schools appears to have been at work, at least in regard to students' faith that their schools were not rigid, impenetrable institutions. The call for more active student involvement in the classroom setting has remained a constant in the last decade, but has been expressed more often as a wish than a demand. The student voice of the '80s is not silent; educators and the public simply may have to bend their ears closer to hear it.

Discipline in School

For several years, the U.S. public has rated "lack of discipline" as one of the biggest problems confronting public schools, according to the National Gallup Poll on Education. In 1983, lack of discipline again headed the list of school problems; 25 percent of the poll respondents cited it as the top school issue. The next most frequently mentioned problem (use of drugs) was reported by only 18 percent of the survey participants.

Clearly, discipline in school is a major concern to adults. But do the students attending the schools also see this as a significant problem? Although a slim majority of students surveyed believe that discipline is either a "not too serious" or a "not at all serious" problem in their schools, another 45 percent do think that discipline constitutes a serious problem in their schools. Furthermore, about 1 student in 10 believes it to be a "very serious" problem.

Students' perception of the severity of discipline problems seems to enter into their overall ratings of their schools. Consequently, students who rated their schools with *A*s and *B*s were more likely to describe the matter of discipline in their schools as "not too serious." In schools receiving grades of *C* or lower, discipline was viewed as a "fairly serious" issue.

Public and private school students did differ on their assessments of discipline as a problem in their schools. On the average, public school students rated discipline "a fairly serious" problem, while private school students generally claimed discipline in their schools was a "not too serious" problem.

In addition to acknowledging that discipline, to varying degrees, is a problem for many schools, students also support more strict enforcement of rules and policies regarding student conduct. About half of the students, particularly those in public schools, agreed that more stringent enforcement of these rules was needed.

An overwhelming majority of the students surveyed (95 percent) indicated that they clearly understood their schools' rules on student conduct and 75 percent of the students said that they did not believe those rules were too strict. Male students and students making grades of *C* and lower were more often included in the remaining 25 percent who reported that "discipline was too strict" at their schools.

Courses

The last several years have resounded with educators' calls for a renewed emphasis on "basic" subjects such as math and English. More recently, computer science and more foreign language study have been added to those entreaties for "beefed-up" curricula.

Apparently, students have joined in support of these recommendations. The students overwhelmingly rated mathematics and English as the "most important" courses offered at their schools. And when asked what courses were not offered at their schools but were needed, the students indicated that computer science and foreign language classes were among their first choices.

By a margin of 40 to 23 percent, students agreed that schools should place more emphasis on the "basics"—English, mathematics, and science. High school seniors, perhaps because they were closer to (and more apprehensive about) putting their school-acquired skills to test in college or the job market, offered more support for stressing basic subjects than did students in other grades.

In keeping with the overall agreement regarding the schools' need to emphasize the "basics," students, when asked to rank 18 different courses as to their importance, chose math as the top subject. A total of 95.2 percent of the students said math was either "very important" or "somewhat important." On a four-point scale, with 1.0 being "not important" and 4.0 being "very important," mathematics received a 3.81 rating.

English classes were awarded the second highest rating of importance. A total of 92 percent of the students indicated that English was either "very important" or "somewhat important."

The technological revolution has entered today's schoolrooms with some startling force. Computer usage and programming, a course offering that did not even appear on the 1974 survey, was the course that 1983 students ranked third in importance, beating out more traditional offerings such as history, business, and even science. More than three-fourths of the students rated computer classes as "very important" or "somewhat important."

While apparently recognizing the growing importance of technological training at least in the computer field, students may not yet have accepted the recently revived call for more emphasis on science education. Science classes were ranked below driver education in importance. Although a substantial percentage of students (46.7 percent)

ranked their science classes as "very important," 50.1 percent of the students gave driver education a similar rating. However, an additional 38.2 percent of the students listed science as "somewhat important." Science was the fifth-ranked subject in students' estimations of their courses' importance.

In the 1974 student survey, "basic" subjects such as English, math, science, and history received similar assessments of their importance. Students in 1974, like the students in 1983, placed great emphasis on subjects most directly related to college entrance and career preparation. The traditional "liberal arts" courses, once very popular among students in the '60s, have lost much of their appeal with the pragmatic teenagers of later decades. Less than half of the students in both the 1974 and 1983 surveys ranked art and music classes as "important" or "somewhat important."

Business courses, however, seem to be gaining in importance, according to the 1983 student survey. While business and commercial classes were considered important to the 1974 students, the youth of the '80s rated such areas of study even higher. Almost 80 percent of today's students gave "very important" or "somewhat important" ratings to business classes.

The once highly-rated courses on the environment and pollution are no longer among the students' most valued classes. A strong ma-

Importance Ratings of Courses

Courses	Combined Rating	Males' Rating	Females' Rating	% Very Important	% Somewhat Important
1. Mathematics	3.81	3.78	3.83	80.2	15.0
2. English	3.72	3.60	3.82	75.8	16.1
3. Computer Usage/ Programming	3.47	3.53	3.42	48.2	28.7
4. Driver Education	3.44	3.42	3.43	50.1	23.6
5. Science	3.36	3.37	3.35	46.7	38.2
6. Government	3.33	3.25	3.39	39.0	36.8
7. Business/Commercial	3.32	3.20	3.41	40.4	38.0
8. History/Social Studies	3.26	3.21	3.30	40.5	41.8
9. Sex Education	3.13	2.95	3.28	30.3	31.3
10. Physical Education	2.91	2.94	2.87	29.9	35.5
11. Environment/Pollution	2.89	2.93	2.86	14.0	38.7
12. Family Living	2.88	2.68	3.03	21.5	34.6
13. Foreign Languages	2.83	2.69	2.96	19.3	41.5
14. Shop	2.79	2.94	2.66	16.4	41.9
15. Religion	2.65	2.67	2.64	18.0	22.5
16. Music	2.43	2.31	2.53	11.9	29.6
17. Art	2.36	2.30	2.41	7.2	30.3
18. Black Studies	2.27	2.17	2.35	6.0	22.0

Very Important	4.0	Not So Important	2.0
Somewhat Important	3.0	Not Important	1.0

jority of students in 1974 claimed such courses were important to them. Today, only 14 percent list study of the environment as "very important" and only another 38 percent rate it "somewhat important."

Perhaps the most dramatic change in students' view of their courses over the last nine years can be seen in the female students' importance ratings. In 1974, females rated the college preparatory classes lower than did males. However, the 1983 female students gave higher ratings of importance to such courses as mathematics, government, history, and foreign languages than did male students. Although the difference in male and female assessments of these courses was small, they do point perhaps to the female students' increased interest in, or awareness of, nontraditional career paths now available to women.

On the other hand, male students gave physical education, computer science, and shop classes higher ratings than did females. But even in these areas, sex stereotyping seems to play only a minor role in the students' rankings. Computer science, for instance, was given a 3.53 rating of importance by the male students and a 3.42 rating by the female students (a 4.0 rating was "very important" and a 3.0 designation indicated "somewhat important"). Similarly, while the differences between male and female ratings of shop and physical education were statistically significant, they were also very small discrepancies.

Reasons for Not Liking Courses

Reasons	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Not Enough Challenge	29.7	31.2	28.5
2. Too Much Challenge	20.4	20.7	20.2
3. Not Interested in Subject	16.4	16.3	16.5
4. Poor Teaching Style	11.4	9.6	12.7
5. Poor Student/Teacher Relationship	10.0	11.5	9.0
6. All Others	12.1	10.6	13.2

Like the fat man trying to lose weight who knows proper nutrition is important and "good for him," but still does not like dieting, students also may acknowledge the importance and need to study certain courses, but still not like taking them. Such was the case when students were asked to list the courses they most liked and disliked. Students in almost equal measures both liked and disliked math, English, and science—the courses they rated as among the most important. What is interesting is not how many students liked or disliked this or that class, but their reasons for not liking a class regardless of the subject.

Almost 30 percent of the students claimed they disliked one or more of their classes because the courses were "not challenging." "The class moves too slowly," some students wrote; others reported, "It's too easy," or "It seems like we do the same thing day after day." For those students who indicated they did not like a particular course, "not

enough challenge" was the most frequently cited reason for three-fourths of all courses. It was the second most frequently offered reason for disliking all the other courses. Contrary to the pervasive image of today's students as lazy, trying to slide through school doing as little work as possible, most students dislike spending their time in classes which they view as too easy.

In some cases, however, students feel that their courses are too difficult. While only a fifth of the students indicated "too much challenge" as the reason for not liking a course, this complaint was the most frequently given reason for disliking mathematics and foreign language studies. Typical student responses which fell under the "too much challenge" category were: "The course is going too fast"; "The subject is too complicated"; and "It's hard to keep up with."

Another 16 percent of students indicated "no interest in the subject" as a reason for not liking some courses. This reason was most frequently mentioned in relation to physical education, speech/drama, and art courses. The lack of interest students reported seems to occur most frequently when students believe the course is not related directly to their future needs. "I'll never use it again" or "no practical use" were typical comments of these students. Like the future-oriented young people of the '70s, students in 1983 seem to also need to clearly see some direct correlation between their current studies and their later college or career pursuits. Apparently, the '80s generation has inherited much of the '70s students' view that schooling is primarily a means to a very definite end; students of both decades tend to see education solely in terms of "getting into a good college" or "getting a decent job." Scarce evidence exists that today's students are likely to experiment with the notion of "learning for learning's sake" as their 1960s counterparts were apt to do.

As evident in several other responses, students rarely cast blame on their teachers. Only 11 percent of the students cited "poor teaching style" as the reason for disliking their courses. Complaints about teaching methods were never the primary reason students expressed for disliking a particular subject and it was the secondary reason given in only 4 out of 20 course areas. Typical comments from students who did offer "poor teaching style" as the cause of their dislike for a course included, "The teacher doesn't fully explain material"; "The teacher is boring"; and "The class is all lecturing."

Principals

Perhaps even more surprising than students' strong support of their teachers is their almost overwhelming praise of school administrators.

Although students in 1974 had already abandoned much of the '60s "code" of not trusting anyone over 30, the 1983 students voiced even greater faith in principals and assistant principals than did their '70s counterparts. Nearly 90 percent of the students in 1983 rated their

principals as showing "some" or "a great deal" of interest in students and their concerns; in comparison, 75 percent of the 1974 students awarded principals such high marks.

Interestingly, students who rated the quality of their schools with a grade of *A* or *B* were most likely to also give the best marks to their principals. An astonishing 98 percent of students in the highest-rated schools reported their principals demonstrated a substantial interest in students. Conversely, students who graded their schools with *C*s or below also gave their principals below average marks; only 11 percent of students in the lowest-rated schools said their principals showed interest in students.

In 1974, students reported that while their principals, for the most part, were "interested" in students, they were less certain that the principals "understood" students and their problems. However, the 1983 students seem to be much more convinced that not only are administrators interested in them, but that they understand them as well. Almost 80 percent of the students reported that their principals showed some or a great deal of understanding of student problems and concerns, compared to only 50 percent of students in 1974 who expressed such confidence in their principals. Here again, the students who rated their schools the highest also gave their principals the most credit for being understanding.

In addition to finding their administrators to be generally caring and understanding about students, the youth of today also report their principals are generally accessible to discuss student issues and concerns. Slightly more than three-quarters of the students indicated their principals were "always" or "usually" available to talk with them. Accessibility, like the ratings of principals' interest and understanding, varied with the students' overall estimation of their schools. In the instances where students rated their schools with an *A* or *B*, more than 90 percent of the principals were characterized as "always" or "usually" accessible. Only 50 percent of the students in the lower-rated schools claimed their principals were that accessible.

An interesting footnote to the students' assessments of their principals is the discrepancies among those ratings by students who have given their schools average or below average marks. While half of the students in the lowest-rated schools are willing to admit their principals are accessible, only 11 percent of such students describe their principals as interested in them and only 30 percent report that their principals understand them and their problems.

Just as students believe their "best" teachers are those who are able to relate well with young people, students also seem to judge their administrators on similar criteria such as their abilities to understand and show an interest in students. Furthermore, students seem to measure the overall quality of their schools, at least partially, by their perceptions of how well and not how much their teachers and administrators interact with students.

The confidence students have in their principals was consistently high among all age groups, in all parts of the country, and among students in private and public schools. Even students who reported receiving average and below average grades granted their principals high marks. The *C* and *D* students' ratings of their principals were equal to those given by students with better grades.

Guidance Counselors

Students today extend their generally positive regard for teachers and principals to their guidance counselors, even though almost 30 percent of the students claim they did not meet with their counselors once during the past school year. Despite this sizable percentage of students who have very little contact with counselors, these students tended to give their counselors the benefit of the doubt and describe them as generally "helpful." This favorable student regard for counselors has remained unchanged over the last decade. Students in 1974 also voiced their overall satisfaction with their counselors, although then, a full 40 percent of the students claimed they only "rarely" met with their counselors.

When students meet with their counselors (a slim majority indicate they meet with their counselors two or three times a year), the most frequently discussed topic is the students' selection of required and elective courses. Forty percent of all counselor visits are for this purpose. The second most cited reason for meeting with counselors was to receive information about colleges, their entrance requirements, and available scholarships. Almost one-fourth of all meetings with counselors were related to the students' college interests.

Students apparently do not readily view their counselors as resources on areas outside academic life. Fewer than 20 percent of the students said they met with their counselors to do some career planning. Fewer than 10 percent of the students met to receive counseling on personal problems. Furthermore, disciplinary issues was the reason for fewer than 4 percent of the visits. In 1974, students reported that 10

percent of their visits to counselors were for discipline-related matters.

Supporting the theory that students rely on counselors primarily for academic assistance are the students' assessments of how helpful their counselors are with various topics. Counselors are given their highest marks for helping in the selection of required courses; students rated counselors as being about midway between "somewhat helpful" and "very helpful" in this regard. Counselors received their second most positive ratings regarding their abilities to help students with college information. With topics not related directly to school curricula and higher education, the students claim counselors are at best only "somewhat helpful."

Not unexpectedly, as students reach their junior and senior years when their course selection options widen and the possibility of college grows nearer, their visits to counselors increase. Also, as expected, students in large cities report visiting their counselors more frequently than do students in less populated areas. This undoubtedly is due to the likelihood that the smaller, more rural schools have fewer counselors than the larger schools in more urban and suburban areas. Furthermore, at the junior high level, the more rural schools may not have any counselors on their faculties.

Students of all ages held an overall "helpful" view of their counselors. However, private school students and, unexplainedly, students from schools in the South, rated their counselors as more helpful in providing college information than did public school students and students from other regions.

Student Activities

School clubs, athletic teams, student government, and musical groups are very popular among today's students. More than 80 percent of the students surveyed reported they had participated in some form of school-related activities during the past school year.

School Sports

By far, sports clubs and teams are the cocurricular activities that involve the largest numbers of students. Nearly half the students reported some involvement with their schools' athletic programs. While substantially more male students than females report participation in school athletics, females are increasingly making their presence known in organized sports. A total of 43 percent of the females said they were active in school sports teams or clubs, up 3 percent from the 1974 survey.

Even on traditional varsity and junior varsity athletic teams, females are well-represented. With the single exception of junior varsity team sports, males and females were equally likely to participate in school-sponsored sports activities.

An overwhelming 86 percent of the students thought that high school students can keep up with their academic life while participating

fully in sports activities. Students in 1974 expressed an equally strong sentiment on this issue.

Although most students agreed that involvement in school sports activities did not detract from students' academic success, some students claimed that athletic success was more highly regarded at their schools than scholastic achievement. Almost two-thirds of the students who rated their schools as average or below average thought that their peers viewed participating in sports as more important than working for academic gains. However, in schools awarded *A* and *B* grades, fewer than a third of the students agreed.

One possible explanation for this difference in students' opinions may be that the highly-rated schools reward and reinforce students' classroom success to an equal or a greater degree than they celebrate athletic accomplishments. Therefore, when students perceive that their teachers and administrators place a high value on scholastic achievement, the students also tend to regard academic life as a worthy goal. Such an emphasis on recognizing academic excellence may be one factor which led the students in highly rated schools to evaluate those schools so positively.

Music

Although sports are by far the most popular type of cocurricular activities, organized music pursuits also engage a large number of today's students. The second most frequently reported cocurricular activity was membership in a school band or orchestra. A little more than a fifth of the students said they played in school bands and orchestras; another 17 percent sang in school choirs or choruses. However, choral activities are primarily the province of female students: almost a fourth of the females reported they were members of school choirs or choruses, compared to only 9 percent of the male students.

Students report they are participants in a variety of school clubs and organizations. About 12 percent of the students are members of language clubs and another 15 percent belong to career-oriented organizations in their schools. School publications, pep clubs, student governments, drama clubs, and service organizations each draw participation from 10 to 12 percent of the student population.

As expected, fewer students report belonging to organizations with selective or competitive membership criteria. For example, only 7.9 percent of the students belong to the National Honor Society; another 6.7 percent are involved in other kinds of honor societies. Cheerleading is also frequently a select group of students drawn through a competitive process and therefore, understandably, only 5.8 percent of the students report they are involved in this school activity.

School activities with a more strictly academic orientation such as science clubs and debate teams were reported as the least popular cocurricular pursuits. Only 5 percent of the students were members of

School-Related Activities

Activities	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Athletic Teams/Clubs	48.2	54.3	43.0
2. Band/Orchestra	20.7	20.9	20.4
3. Choir/Choral Groups	17.6	9.1	24.9
4. Career-Oriented Clubs	15.2	10.2	19.5
5. Language Clubs	12.0	8.5	15.0
6. Drama/Theater	11.8	8.0	15.0
7. Pep Club	11.7	6.2	16.4
8. School Publications	11.5	9.6	13.1
9. Student Council/Government	10.6	5.6	15.0
10. Service/Volunteer Groups	10.2	6.2	13.7
11. National Honor Society	7.9	7.8	7.9
12. Other Honorary Societies	6.7	4.7	8.5
13. Debate/Speech	6.6	4.9	8.1
14. Cheerleading	5.8	.5	10.4
15. Science Clubs	5.2	6.2	4.2
16. None	17.7	20.5	15.2

science clubs and only a little more than 6 percent belonged to debate or speech organizations.

In almost all instances, female students seem more interested in student activities than do male students. Except for sports, science clubs, and band or orchestra membership, most activities involve more females than males. Traditionally female-dominated activities such as the school choir, pep club, and drama groups have remained primarily in the distaff domain. However, the student activities once heavily populated with male students, now seem to have a membership majority of female students. For example, significantly more female than male students belong to student councils, debate teams, and school publication staffs.

Student grades apparently are not jeopardized by involvement in cocurricular activities. In fact, in the majority of cases, school-related activities drew disproportionate numbers of students with the highest grades. Students who reported making mostly *C*s were less likely to report participating in school clubs and organizations. This may be the result of school policies which bar students with lower grade averages from joining in cocurricular activities. More likely, however, students with lower academic records choose not to join in organized school activities. These students may perceive such activities as merely extensions of classwork or may adhere to the stereotyped notion that student activities are pastimes only for "eggheads," "brown-nosers," or "goody two-shoes" students.

Student Councils

Student councils enjoy the general support of their constituents; more than 75 percent of the students surveyed said they considered

their councils valuable. However, these organizations are respected primarily for their influence on the social life of their schools rather than for their role in academic or policy matters.

A total of 71 percent of the students said their student councils were valuable because they provide social activities for the student body. Only half of the students, however, cited "communicating student views to administration" as a reason they felt their student councils were valuable. Furthermore, less than a third of the students regard their student councils as means of influencing decisions about school rules.

Most students also doubted the student governments' ability to affect school decisions about their courses; fewer than 14 percent of the students reported their student councils are valuable for this reason.

Apparently, students believe their teachers share their perceptions of student councils. Seventy-five percent of the students thought that their teachers supported the councils. However, the students report that teachers value these student organizations for virtually the same reasons that they do. About half of the students said their teachers view councils as beneficial for the social functions they provide. About half also indicated that teachers regard student councils as a vehicle for transmitting student opinions to administrators. Fewer than a fifth of the students said teachers value the councils as a means of influencing course offerings.

Despite the students' characterization of student councils as primarily agents for sponsoring social events, the students do feel the councils are generally successful in representing the interests of all students in their schools. About 70 percent of the students said their councils were "somewhat" or "very successful" in representing the student body.

Students were not quite as supportive in their views of how well student councils represent *average* students. Only a little more than half judged their councils as successfully representing these constituents.

Additionally, students believe their student councils communicate more frequently and effectively with the faculty than with the student body. About 71 percent of the students said their student councils inform the teachers of council activities, while only 54 percent claimed their student bodies were kept apprised of council events. Furthermore, only slightly more than half of the students believed that the principals and faculties of their schools called on the student council for assistance.

Students' assessment of their student governments has changed very little in the last decade. In 1974, 70 percent of the students credited their councils with only limited success. The 1974 and 1983 students' qualified support of their student governments may be due to the narrow range of influence which the councils possess. Student councils traditionally have had only minor authority in the areas of school policies, rules, and academic matters. Consequently, their most visible

role has been in conducting school social activities. Not surprisingly, therefore, the students' evaluation of the councils dwell largely on the councils' performance in providing such social events.

Thus, students seem to view their elected representative bodies as relatively powerless. Even in the highest-rated schools, only 65 percent of the students thought their administrators and teachers sought out the councils' assistance. This finding, combined with the substantial numbers of students who question the councils' abilities to represent the interests of the average student and who do not believe the councils communicate the student viewpoint to school administrators, indicates that in the lives of today's students, their councils play only a very minor role.

Why Student Council Is Valuable

Reasons	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Provides Social Activities	71.0	65.3	75.9
2. Communicates Student Views to Administration	50.7	45.7	55.1
3. Affects Decisions About Cocurricular Activities	39.6	37.2	41.6
4. Provides Opportunity for Volunteer Activities	34.6	31.0	37.8
5. Affects Decisions About School Rules	32.2	29.4	34.7
6. Acts as a Unifying Force Among Students	28.2	25.8	30.3
7. Affects Decisions About Courses Offered	13.9	15.4	12.7
8. All Others	2.7	2.7	2.7

At best, student councils are viewed as social organizers, and at worst, as rather exclusive "clubs" with little real influence. However, almost two-thirds of the students report that their classmates recognize and accept the extent and limitations of the student councils' power. This attitude may be a reflection of the relatively quiet nature of this generation of students. By contrast, the students of the turbulent '60s certainly recognized the limits of their elected student representatives but often were not accepting of the situation. "Student power" apparently is truly a slogan of the past.

Chapter 2

After the Dismissal Bell

Jobs, Sports, and Rock Music Fill the "Off" Hours

Today's typical secondary students spend about seven hours a day in school, another hour getting to and from school, and approximately an hour each day studying. Add to that about eight hours of sleep each day and perhaps about four hours a week for cocurricular activities. That leaves a little more than 60 hours a week for students' "spare" time. How do young people of the '80s spend that time?

Students' choices about their pastimes provide an interesting perspective on the nature and attitudes of today's adolescents. While perhaps not *products* of the technological age, these students certainly are eager converts to the electronic advancements around them. Video games and computers were not even mentioned as student interests in the 1974 survey, yet these activities are among the most frequently cited leisure pursuits today. Music and television are ever popular among students, causing reading to take a back seat to these more visual and noisy pleasures. Sports, cars, and clothes are important to students today, but these material concerns are balanced by substantial student involvement in church activities, youth organizations, and after-school jobs.

Working Students

Just as they did in 1974, students today overwhelmingly support high school students holding down jobs. A total of 92 percent of the students think that a high school student should have a part-time job. During the summer, however, high school students should work full time, the respondents concluded.

However, difficult financial times apparently are keeping students from realizing their hopes for after-school employment. At the time of the survey, only 30 percent of the students were working at paying jobs; another 30 percent reported they were looking for employment. By contrast, in 1974 almost half of the students had part-time jobs.

The most common type of student employment, accounting for nearly a quarter of the jobs, is retail sales; students in this field generally serve as sales clerks and stock persons. Restaurants also are substantial employers of youth. Seventeen percent of the students work in restaurants. Another 17 percent deliver newspapers. Many students rely on finding work on a job-by-job basis; one-third of the working students earned income in this way by babysitting, mowing lawns, and cleaning houses.

While most students (87 percent) do not believe that their jobs have a negative effect on their schoolwork, many do feel that working interferes with their social lives and their ability to participate in school-related activities. Forty percent of the students said their jobs kept them from joining in cocurricular events and 25 percent claim that working disrupted their social lives. Female students more frequently reported that jobs had a negative impact on their social activities than did males: 30 percent of the females made this claim, contrasted to less than 20 percent of the males. Fewer than 10 percent of the students said their jobs adversely affected their health.

Parents do not share the students' enthusiasm for teenage employment. While more than three-quarters of the students favored high school students working during the school year, fewer than half of them reported that their parents agreed with their sentiments. However, summer employment for teenagers enjoys considerably more support among parents, the students contend. Seventy percent of the parents, the students said, think high school students should work during the summer.

Despite the parental and student support for summer employment, only 40 percent of the students had summer jobs; 10 percent worked full time and 30 percent had summer part-time employment. The pattern of teenage employment during the summer is very similar to

that of students in 1974. Forty percent of the '70s students also held summer jobs, primarily in the retail sales and restaurant fields.

Students recommended that employers who wish to hire teenagers should place advertisements in the employment sections of their local newspapers. Sixty-five percent of the students said that the newspaper classified section was one of the first places they would begin looking for jobs. Parents and other adults were the second most frequently mentioned resource for finding jobs. A total of 55 percent of the students said they would ask their parents or other adults for personal job referrals. Only 20 percent reported they would seek employment assistance from their school guidance counselors. However, students who rated their overall school programs highly were more likely to confer with guidance counselors about job possibilities. These students from schools with *A* or *B* ratings would seek assistance from their counselors about one and a half times more frequently than students from the lower-rated schools.

Community Service and Non-School Organizations

School and work are only part of student life in the '80s. Many students also are involved in community organizations and volunteer activities. A little more than a third of the students reported they participated in church or religious group activities. Seventeen percent of the males also listed scouting as one of their pastimes; only 5.6 percent of the female students reported they were active in scouting. Other youth organizations such as 4-H clubs, YMCA/YWCA, and Junior Achievement were listed by 3-9 percent of the students as activities in which they participated.

Except for student involvement in church or religious groups, participation in these community organizations apparently is unrelated to academic performance. Religious groups included among their membership ranks more students making "mostly *A*s" and fewer students making "mostly *C*s" than other kinds of community organizations. Also, females were more likely to be involved with religious organizations than males; 38 percent of the females compared to 31 percent of the males reported they were active in church or religious groups.

Non-School Activities

Activities	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Church/Religious Group	35.0	31.2	38.3
2. Boy/Girl Scouts	11.0	17.2	5.6
3. 4-H	8.7	6.7	10.4
4. YMCA/YWCA	5.5	5.6	5.4
5. Junior Achievement	3.2	3.3	3.1
6. All Others	19.8	17.6	21.8
7. None	38.7	43.9	34.3

Volunteer community service also engages many students, although the percentage has dropped slightly in the last nine years. About 41 percent of the 1983 students reported they volunteered some time to community service. Almost half of the students surveyed in 1974 reported donating some type of volunteer work. While the numbers of students active in volunteering may have decreased somewhat, the 1974 pattern of more females contributing volunteer services than males has held true into the '80s. Almost 47 percent of the females said they served as volunteers, compared to 36 percent of the males.

Fund-raising activities were the kind of volunteer work most frequently cited by students. About 28 percent of the students active in volunteering said they helped out with various fund-raising efforts. The second most common form of student volunteer work was with hospitals. This kind of work was primarily done by females, however. While almost 34 percent of the females who reported doing volunteer work served in hospitals, only 3 percent of the male volunteers donated their services in this area. A reverse trend is true of students who volunteer time to environment-related issues; fewer than 4 percent of the females active in volunteer work reported being involved in environmental work, compared to almost 22 percent of the male volunteers.

In keeping with both the '70s' and '80s' trend of student noninvolvement with political matters, the 1983 students reported they did very little volunteer work related to election campaigns. Only 6.2 percent of the students who indicated they performed some type of voluntary community service said they donated time to elections.

Types of Volunteer Community-Service Activities

	% All	% Males	% Females
Likely To Do Community Service	41.6	35.6	46.6
Not Likely To Do Community Service	58.4	64.4	53.4

	Percent of Students Indicating Involvement		
Types of Community Service	Both	Males	Females
1. Fund-raising	27.8	24.8	29.7
2. Hospital Volunteer	21.0	3.1	33.9
3. Environment Related	10.9	21.7	3.7
4. Church Related	6.7	7.5	6.2
5. Election Campaigns	6.2	6.2	6.2
6. Charity Volunteer	5.0	5.0	5.0
7. Working with Elderly	4.7	4.4	5.0
8. Helping Others Generally	3.5	3.1	3.7
9. Working with Handicapped	2.7	1.2	3.7
10. Working with Mentally Impaired	1.2	.6	1.7
11. All Others	15.9	18.6	12.4

Leisure Activities

Sports

While clearly viewed as an important part of school life, sports also are a major interest among students after school hours. Not only do almost all students report that they watch sports activities, almost two-thirds of them list sports and fitness activities as personal "hobbies and special interests." Almost half of the students claim sports as their first or second choice in leisure activities.

Furthermore, the students of today also report overwhelmingly that sports and fitness are important parts of their lives. Ninety percent of the students said that sports were either "somewhat" or "very" important parts of their lives.

Both male and female students ranked sports as tops in importance to their leisure time lives. Furthermore, females and males alike claim to watch or listen to sports events. Surprisingly, more females than males report they watch or listen to basketball games. More than 68 percent of the females, compared to 57 percent of the males, regularly follow basketball events.

Clearly, according to today's youth, the "great American pastime" is not baseball. Almost 80 percent of the students, both males and females, said they regularly watch or listen to football games, compared with only 55 percent who regularly watch or listen to baseball games. In fact, basketball ranked higher among students than did baseball. Sixty-three percent of all the students surveyed said they regularly watched or listened to basketball games.

Sports That Teenagers Regularly Listen To or Watch

Sports	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Football	79.4	81.3	77.8
2. Basketball	63.2	57.2	68.4
3. Baseball	55.3	59.5	51.6
4. Wrestling	35.0	43.4	27.8
5. Tennis	25.3	21.8	28.3
6. Soccer	22.8	24.7	21.2
7. Boxing	22.6	35.6	11.4
8. Hockey	20.6	27.4	14.6
9. Track	20.6	19.4	21.6
10. Golf	10.4	14.9	6.6
11. All Others	25.6	20.3	30.3
12. None	5.7	4.0	7.1

Wrestling was the students' fourth choice of sports to watch, although males reported this as a favorite far more frequently than did females. Tennis ranked fifth among the students and more females reported watching this sport than did males. Sports such as soccer, boxing, hockey, and track followed in the rankings, each claiming a regular audience of about one-fifth of the students.

Music

Just as it has with young people of several generations, music plays a significant part in the lives of today's youth. Almost 81 percent of the students cited music as an important part of their lives. Additionally, music was the fourth-ranked student hobby; almost 42 percent of the students listed music as a personal hobby or special interest. Female students were more likely to claim music as an important part of their lives and as a hobby or special interest. Fifty-three percent of the females said music was a hobby compared with only a third of the males. By a lesser margin, females also more often cited music as important to their lives than did males. Three-quarters of the males said music was an important part of their lives and 85 percent of the females deemed music as important to them.

As expected, new kinds of music have appeared on the student scene since the 1970s. And while the relatively recent musical trends such as "punk" and "new wave" command the interests of a substantial segment of the student population, rock music is by far still the reigning style among teenagers today. A total of 88 percent of the students report they like to listen to rock music. In a distant second place, with not quite 40 percent of the students listening in, is new wave music. Country and western music claimed third place with slightly more than 35 percent of the students reporting they enjoyed the Nashville sounds. Only 15 percent of the students said they enjoyed listening to classical music.

Taste in music varies according to sexes and the geographic regions. Females, for example, seem to be in the forefront of fans for

emerging styles of music. Female students more often reported liking the more recent arrivals to the musical scene such as punk rock and new wave.

New wave music also enjoys greater support among students in western states. Not surprisingly, country and western music was more popular among southern students, while students from northern states have yet to be won over by the likes of Loretta Lynn and Willie Nelson. Rock music's popularity, however, transcends all regional and age differences among the students.

Adults have traditionally been concerned that music may negatively influence young attitudes about a host of issues. Most prominent among these concerns are contemporary music's emphasis on drugs and sex. However, perhaps to some adults' dismay, the students believe that today's popular music does accurately express the attitudes of contemporary youth. Almost three-quarters of the students, without specifying any particular issues, agreed that current music groups and singers reflect the views of young people today. Furthermore, support for this belief is found uniformly among students, regardless of age, family income, region of the country, or academic performance. The only discrepancy among students on this issue was by sex; more females (80 percent) than males (70 percent) said that musicians mirror the attitudes of the '80s teenagers.

Types of Music

Music	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Rock	88.1	86.4	89.6
2. New Wave	38.6	29.8	46.2
3. Country and Western	36.3	36.8	35.8
4. Punk	28.1	19.4	35.7
5. Easy Listening	23.1	18.5	27.2
6. Disco	22.1	17.4	26.2
7. Soul	17.9	14.5	20.8
8. Classical	15.0	15.1	14.8
9. Show Tunes	14.3	10.7	17.3
10. Blues	6.0	7.6	4.6
11. Folk	4.3	5.4	3.5
12. Religious	2.7	1.8	3.5
13. Jazz	2.0	2.9	1.2
14. Pop	1.6	.9	2.1
15. All Others	2.5	2.9	2.1

Video Games and Computers

Video games, a relative newcomer to student life, was high on the list of hobbies and special interests. A total of 47 percent of the students named video games as a hobby, thus surpassing music in students' lists of leisure pursuits. More males than females, however, are likely to cite the likes of Pac-Man and Donkey Kong as hobbies. Almost 57 percent of

the males. compared with about 39 percent of the females, said the video arcade was a popular source of entertainment.

While ranking very high on students' lists of reported hobbies, video games apparently have not fully captured young people's attention. When asked to rate eight areas according to their importance in students' lives, the teenagers put video games at the bottom of the heap. Students rated television, styles of clothing, and even newspapers and magazines higher in importance than video games. Still, arcade owners will not be closing up shop soon; 40 percent of the students—51 percent of the males—claim video games to be a somewhat or very important part of their lives.

Although achieving "high score" on the local Asteroids game may require fast reflexes and a quick mind, students who make the highest grades are among the least likely to play video games. On the other hand, students who report making mostly *C*s were more often among those students citing video games as one of their most frequent spare time activities.

Interest in video games is also a function of students' ages. Junior high students apparently are far greater fans of video games than are senior high students.

Like video games, computers were not even mentioned among the hobbies students reported in 1974. In the last 10 years, video games have become the third most frequently cited leisure activity and computers now are listed as seventh among students' choice of hobbies. More than a quarter of the students listed computers as a hobby. More males seem to have adopted the new technology in their spare time, however; 35 percent of the males versus only 20 percent of the females cited computers as a special interest.

Hobbies and Special Interests

Interests	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Sports/Fitness	64.9	70.2	60.3
2. Reading	49.1	36.3	60.1
3. Video Games	47.1	56.6	38.9
4. Music	43.8	33.6	52.6
5. Cooking and Baking	39.9	20.7	56.5
6. Collecting Things	39.8	41.2	38.5
7. Art	32.9	30.7	34.7
8. Computers	27.3	35.0	20.6
9. Dancing	23.4	7.4	37.2
10. Photography	20.3	19.4	21.0
11. Model Building	18.3	35.6	3.3
12. Woodworking	18.3	29.8	8.3
13. Sewing and Knitting	17.6	4.9	28.5
14. Dramatics	15.2	10.2	19.5
15. Science Hobbies	10.9	14.7	7.5
16. All Others	12.2	12.3	12.1

Important Part of Life

Activities	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Sports/Fitness	90.0	90.2	89.8
2. Music	80.9	75.7	85.4
3. Automobile	76.5	75.3	77.5
4. Newspapers	74.1	70.6	77.1
5. Type and Style of Clothing	73.9	65.7	80.9
6. Magazines	62.3	63.5	61.3
7. Television	58.0	60.1	56.1
8. Table and Video Games	40.4	51.2	31.0

Television, Radio, and the Movies

Despite the advent of more advanced technology such as computers and video games, the earlier electronic inventions still claim more of teenagers' attention today. The average secondary school student spends about six hours a day watching television and listening to the radio. Females reported tuning in their radios for longer periods each day than did males; females listen to the radio almost three and a half hours a day, while males listen slightly less than three hours a day.

These radio listeners for the most part are tuned to music programs. More than 90 percent of the students said they listened to music programs, while only 18 percent of the students said they regularly listened to radio news shows.

Television also occupies students for about three hours each day, with male students viewing the screen slightly longer than female students. Younger students tend to favor television over radio. Senior high students spend less time watching television than do junior high students.

In support of the time-honored notion that television in particular has a negative influence on young people's academic performance, the survey found that students who reported making better grades in school did devote less time to both radio and television than did students making lower grades.

Movies, on the contrary, seem to have little relation to student academic performance, probably because they are not major pastimes of today's students. Perhaps surprisingly, students, on the average, only go to the movies about once every three weeks. Although almost all students report they attend movies sometimes, about 40 percent said they see a movie less than once a month.

The emergence of video games, home computers, video recorders, and other electronic advances may account for students' relative lack of interest in movies. Hollywood may be losing some of its teenage market to the array of entertainment equipment now available for home use.

Reading

Perhaps one of the most startling comparisons between today's

teenagers and those surveyed nine years ago lies in their reading habits. In 1974, students reported that they read less than one book per month, including school-assigned readings. Today, however, students, on the average, read two books per month for their own enjoyment and start on a third. An even more dramatic change is evident in the students' view of reading as a pastime. In 1974, the students listed reading next to last in their choice of hobbies and special interests (only writing received less support). Fewer than 1 percent of the 1974 students cited reading as a hobby. In 1983, however, reading was the second most frequently mentioned pastime; a total of 49 percent of the students claimed reading as a leisure time interest.

Reading, however, is far more popular among females. Sixty percent of the females listed reading as a hobby, compared with only 36 percent of the males. For every five books read by male students, the females, on the average, read eight.

While the amount of time students devote to television and radio far surpasses the time spent reading, the majority of students spend about two hours and 20 minutes a week on leisure book reading. Females read about a half hour more a week than do males.

Not unexpectedly, students' reading habits correspond with academic performance. Students making mostly *A*s reported reading four books for every one read by students making mostly *D*s. These *A* students put in about two hours and 45 minutes a week in reading for pleasure, which is more than twice as much as the students with mostly *D*s.

Fiction is the most commonly reported type of leisure reading, with mysteries, romantic novels, and science fiction topping the list of reading preferences. While females are overwhelmingly the readers of romantic fiction, males are the science fiction buffs. Females cited

Types of Non-Course Books

Book Types	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Mystery	46.5	42.8	49.7*
2. Romantic Fiction	37.8	3.8	67.2
3. Science Fiction	29.8	43.9	17.5
4. Biography	11.2	11.1	11.2
5. History	9.4	13.6	5.8
6. Do-It-Yourself	8.1	12.5	4.2
7. Self-Help	6.6	4.0	8.9
8. Religious/Inspirational	6.4	5.1	7.5
9. Fiction, Unspecified	4.0	2.7	5.2
10. Sports	3.8	7.8	.4
11. Horror/Suspense	2.1	1.6	2.5
12. Adventure	1.9	3.1	.8
13. Comedy/Humor	1.7	1.6	1.7
14. Teen	1.1	0.0	2.1
15. All Others	9.0	14.0	4.6

mysteries, the most popular reading choice among all students, only slightly more than did males.

In addition to leisure reading, a vast majority of today's students also read to keep abreast of current events. Eighty-five percent of the students report reading a daily newspaper at least one day each week; the overall average was slightly more than three days a week.

As students get older, they devote more time to reading newspapers. For example, seventh graders averaged reading a paper between two and three days a week, while high school seniors averaged four days a week. Newspaper readership also varies among parts of the country. Students from southern states were the least frequent newspaper readers and northern students were the most avid readers.

Student newspapers are also popular reading material. In schools which publish a newspaper, three-quarters of the students report that they are regular readers of the papers. Readership of these newspapers did not vary among regions, students' grade levels, or academic performance. However, as with leisure reading and daily newspapers, female students tend to read school publications with greater frequency than do males.

Unlike the rise in leisure reading among today's students, the popularity of daily and school newspapers has held constant over the last 10 years.

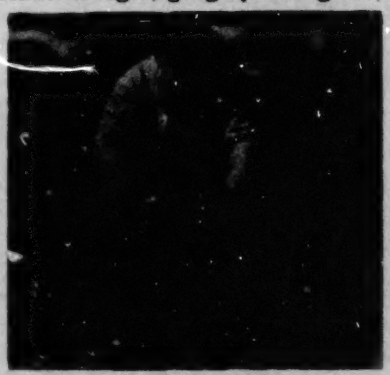
Magazines are very popular among today's students. More than 90 percent spend some time, an average of two hours a week, reading magazines. However, in contrast to other types of reading matter, more males than females choose to read magazines. And magazines are read less by western and midwestern students than by students in other parts of the nation. As in the case of newspaper readership, students from northern states spent the most time reading magazines.

Transportation

While more than three-quarters of the students listed automobiles as an important part of their lives, only about 15 percent of today's students drive their own cars. The students' ages, geographic regions,

Most Common Forms of Transportation

Transportation Type	% Students
1. Riding with Family Member	55.7
2. School Bus	43.0
3. Walk	34.7
4. Riding with Friends	32.9
5. Driving Family Car	22.0
6. Bicycle	21.7
7. Driving Own Car	15.6
8. Public Transportation	11.4
9. Motorcycle/Moped	6.4



and hometown population, of course, are the primary factors in their modes of transportation. Younger students typically rode in cars with family members, took school buses, walked, or biked to get around. Older students, naturally, were more likely to ride with friends or drive a family-owned car. The wider availability of public transportation in northern states and urban areas make this form of transportation more likely for students from these areas. Conversely, students from southern states and rural areas were more likely to drive their own cars. Bicycle ridership was highest among students from the northern states.

Earning and Spending Money

The array of leisure activities open to and popular among today's students are accompanied by some substantial pricetags. How do students pay the costs of entertainment, transportation, clothes, etc.?

A slim majority of students report receiving an allowance averaging about $9 a week. Females, perhaps because they less frequently have part-time jobs, receive slightly higher allowances, an average of about $9.60 per week. Male student allowances average $8 a week.

Working students average about $36 a week at their part-time jobs—males earn about $41 a week and females earn about $31 a week. However, student salaries increase considerably among older students. High school seniors report earning a weekly average of $56, while eighth graders report an income of $16 per week. With an average of about $14 a week to spend as they choose, how do today's students use their money?

In reporting their expenditures, students indicated that putting money aside into savings is their heaviest financial obligation. On the average, students report saving about $137 a year.

After savings, clothing, entertainment, and transportation costs consume most of the students' money. Females spend almost three times as much as males on clothes. Females spend an average of $143 a year on clothes, compared to male clothing expenditures of only $57.

How Students Spend Their Own Money

Expenditures	Total	Males	Females
1. Savings	$137	$145	$130
2. Clothing	103	57	143
3. Entertainment	73	95	55
4. Local Transportation	62	79	96
5. Food	61	60	63
6. Travel/Vacations	35	31	39
7. Education-Related	31	17	43
8. Insurance	28	22	34
9. Personal Care Products	26	7	41
10. All Others	24	15	30
Total	$580	$528	$674

Females claim to buy just over a third of their clothing with their own funds, while males pay for less than a fifth of their clothes with their own money. Females also spend almost six times more money on personal care products than do males.

On the other hand, male students spend almost twice as much as females on entertainment. Males, probably because of their adherence to the traditional custom of footing the entire bill for dates, spend an average of $95 a year on entertainment compared to females' expenses of only $55 for entertainment.

Transportation is another high expense item for students. Reported as the fourth-greatest cost area, female students spend about $96 a year on local transportation and males spend about $60. Students report spending another $61 of their own money on food each year. Education-related expenses apparently are not the responsibility of most students. Females report spending about $43 a year on education-related items; males only spend $17 of their own money in this area.

Chapter 3

The Homefront

Traditional Squabbles Amid Relative Harmony

Some degree of disagreement between parents and their teenage children has come to be viewed over the years as commonplace, an expected part of a child's development. Among recent generations, parent-teen conflicts are viewed as "phases" to be endured, not unlike the teething and temper tantrum stages associated with infants. Among the students of the '80s, these traditional rifts persist. However, what was once called the "generation gap" narrowed to a mere "crack" during the '70s, and today appears more like a simple hairline scratch for most students.

Not trusting anyone over 30 is a sentiment from a bygone era; most students now report that not only do they generally get along with their parents, they also respect and share their parents' values.

When students do clash with their parents today, the disputed issues are *not* likely to stem from discrepancies in basic philosophy. The arguments arise, just as they did a decade earlier, most frequently over curfews, choice of friends, clothing and hair styles, and an assortment of "house rules."

On the average, students report that their parents have strict rules regarding four areas of student behavior; these most often are rules regarding curfews, attendance at religious services, household chores, and students' choices of friends. Almost 70 percent of the students said their parents had strict rules concerning curfews, and about half of the students reported their parents held tight reins on them regarding attendance at religious services, selection of friends, and completion of household chores.

These most frequently cited rules are applied equally to male and female teens, according to the students. However, parents "come down a little harder" on their female children when it comes to dating. More than half of the female students said their parents have strict rules about their choice of dates. In contrast, only a third of the males said their parents imposed strict dating rules on them.

Areas in Which Parents Have Strict Rules

Rules	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Curfew	69.2	66.4	71.7
2. Attend Religious Services	51.6	54.6	48.9
3. Time on Household Chores	49.3	52.3	46.6
4. Friends	47.0	47.2	46.8
5. Whom Teenager Dates	43.6	33.2	52.6
6. Time on Schoolwork	42.4	46.8	38.5
7. Preparation for Career	38.6	44.3	33.7
8. Hair/Clothing Styles	37.0	43.2	31.6
9. Kinds of Hobbies/Sports	23.6	30.1	17.9
10. Time on Hobbies/Sports	23.4	29.4	18.1

The male students, however, more frequently report that their parents have strict rules in five other areas: time spent on schoolwork, career preparation, hair and clothing styles, kinds of hobbies and sports, and time spent on those hobbies and sports. From 30 to 46 percent of the male students report their parents have strict rules on these topics; in contrast, only 18 to 38 percent of the females claim their parents have strict rules in these areas.

Parental rules change according to the age of their teenagers. Younger teens were more often subject to stricter rules regarding schoolwork, friends, dating, and personal appearance than were older students. The age of students, however, apparently does not play a role in the frequency with which parents set rules about curfews, chores, attendance at religious services, and preparation for the future.

Although the areas of discrepancy varied, between 40 and 68 percent of the students believed at least one of their parents' rules should be relaxed. Students raised the most objections to rules about their dates, curfews, and choices of friends. Students were least likely to complain about rules on schoolwork, household chores, and career preparation.

In the last decade, the nature of student complaints about parents' rules have remained constant. In 1974, females were smarting over curfews and dating rules and males were contesting parental rules on haircuts and dress styles—just as the 1983 students continue to do today.

To some adults' surprise, perhaps, small but significant percentages of students feel parents should be stricter in some areas. The most frequently mentioned areas in this category were rules related to schoolwork, attendance at religious services, and completion of household chores.

Getting Along with Parents

Despite the traditional squabbles between teens and their parents about curfews, chores, and dating, students today generally report that their relationships with parents are positive. Between one-half and two-

thirds of the students characterized their relationships with their mothers as happy, friendly, or comfortable. Fewer than 4 percent of the students said their relationships with their mothers were unhappy, unfriendly, or uncomfortable. Males and females were equally "happy" in their relationships with mothers; however, females more frequently reported they were friendly or comfortable with their mothers.

Student relationships with fathers were reported as only a little less positive than the teens' relations with their mothers. Only 10 percent of the students labeled their dealings with their fathers as "uncomfortable"; even fewer students (about 5 percent) report having uncomfortable relationships with their mothers.

Today's teenager has parental relations which are more than merely "comfortable" or "happy" or "friendly." On the whole, students also claim they hold a great deal of respect for their parents. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 signifying "total respect" and 1 meaning "no respect," teenagers awarded their mothers a rating of 4.3; fathers received an overall 4.2 rating. Fewer than 3 percent of the students indicated little or no respect for their mothers and only 5 percent of the students said they had such a low regard for their fathers.

Male and female students did not differ in their reports of respect for their mothers. Only a slight difference existed among the sexes in their ratings of their fathers. Male students tended to rate their respect for their fathers higher (4.4) than did females (4.1).

Students today also tend to extend their positive reports about parental relationships to other members of their families. About 75 percent of the students reported they had no serious problems getting along with any family members. Apparently, family relationships have generally improved over the last decade. In 1974, only half of the students claimed they had no problems with other family members.

The quarter of the 1984 students who indicated they had some degree of difficulty in getting along with family members were asked to identify whether the problems arose with their mother, father, sister(s), or brother(s). Each category of family member was named by about 35 percent of these students as the object of their family disputes. When extrapolated to the entire student sample, this finding indicates that only about 10 percent of all students report difficulties with their mother, and likewise, 10 percent claim their problems are with their father. Less than harmonious relationships with brothers and sisters also are cited by only 10 percent of the students.

Family Members with Whom Students Can Discuss Problems

Relationship	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Mother	73.7	69.3	77.6
2. Father	35.6	49.6	23.1
3. Brother	14.8	17.2	12.7
4. Sister	19.4	13.0	25.1

Family Communications: Still a Trouble Spot

The time-honored problem of communication between teenagers and their parents has apparently lessened in recent years, but remains as a significant area of contention with young people today.

While almost three-quarters of the students contend they can discuss their personal problems with their mothers, only slightly more than a third of the students share the same sentiment about their fathers. Almost half of the male students said they could bring their personal concerns to their fathers, but fewer than a quarter of the females reported they could approach their fathers with problems.

Despite this current perception among today's students that communication with their fathers is difficult, the situation has improved in the last decade. In 1974, fewer than 20 percent of all the students claimed they could discuss problems with their fathers. The improvement notwithstanding, mothers continue to serve more frequently as the teenagers' "listening ear" and a fourth of the students still claim that they are unable to air personal problems even with their mothers.

The reasons students most often give for this continuing lack of communication between teenagers and their parents stem from two major perceptions many young people hold about their parents: the belief that many parents' standards are rigidly anchored in the past, and the feeling that parents too often treat them "like children."

Forty percent of the students level the charge that their parents are "old-fashioned." However, in keeping with the students' reports that they can more easily discuss problems with their mothers, the students also claim their mothers are more up-to-date than fathers. By a three-to-two margin, mothers were more frequently characterized as having "somewhat" or "very" modern ideas.

The frequency with which students label their parents as out of step with the times increases among older teens. Likewise, student reports of their parents being too rigid in their thinking mount as children pass from junior high to senior high school. Not quite a fifth of the seventh graders claim their parents are too rigid, but almost a third of the twelfth graders charged their parents with this criticism.

SA

Parents have been depicted as "old-fashioned" and "too rigid" by their children for several generations. These were the most frequently voiced complaints about parents among the 1974 students. And although the frequency of these charges has diminished somewhat in the last decade, undoubtedly future cadres of students will also contend their parents are behind the times.

Another long-standing student criticism of their parents is that they treat their teenage sons and daughters "like children." Regardless of the students' age group, about 30 percent of today's students express this feeling about their parents. This complaint, perhaps more than any other, epitomizes the difficulties which the teen years bring to both parents and students alike. Secondary school students are traversing somewhere between childhood and adult life. Parents, too, are often in a quandary as to whether they should deal with their teenage sons and daughters as children, adults, or some mix of the two.

Adolescents—in the process of gaining more and more independence—develop a stronger sense of their own way of doing things and of looking at the world. This development invariably puts students at odds with their parents on some issues. Rather than signaling a serious problem among parents and children, these age-old complaints from students about mothers and fathers are probably best viewed as an expected, albeit trying, part of growing up.

Sharing Values

While significant numbers of today's students will say their parents are "old-fashioned" or "too strict," when it come to more substantive issues such as politics, sex, drugs, religion, and careers, young people appear to have increasingly adopted the views of their parents.

The so-called "quiet" generation of the '70s appears to have been replaced in the '80s with students who are even more likely to voice only minimal disagreement with the opinions and values of their parents. In eight major issue areas—drugs, education, work, politics, choice of friends, religion, sex, and dress styles—a clear majority of students said they agreed with their parents' views.

Despite continuing reports of widespread drug use among today's teenagers, drug use was the area in which students reported the strongest agreement with their parents' opinions. More than three-quarters of the students claimed they shared their parents' attitudes about drug use. This figure is up considerably from the 1974 survey in which only half of the students said their opinions about drug use closely resembled their parents' views.

Today's student values concerning work and education also correspond to a great degree with their parents' outlooks. Again, at least 73 percent of the students report that parents and children are in agreement regarding education and work ethics.

While still capturing a majority of the students, the level of support for parental views on politics dips lower than the degree of student-

parent agreement on the drug, work, and education-related topics. A little more than three-quarters of the students contend they share their mothers' political views; fathers' political opinions get the nod from about 70 percent of the students.

Even issues such as sex and religion, once hotbeds of parent-teen conflict, do not seem to elicit major disagreement between today's students and their parents. Almost three-quarters of the students claim their religious beliefs are in line with their mothers' views; 65 percent of the students are in agreement with their fathers' religious tenets.

The 1980s have been characterized by an unprecedented incidence of teenage pregnancy, yet, curiously, a majority of students in the survey contend that their attitudes about sex are consistent with their parents' beliefs. Almost 75 percent of the female students claim they agree with their mothers about issues related to sex; 63 percent of the male students report they agree with their mothers on such matters. Female students, however, are much less likely to agree with their fathers' view of sex-related topics; only 59 percent of the females report such agreement with their fathers' beliefs. While in almost all other areas, male students tend to voice more agreement with their mothers' views, sex is the exception to this rule. Male students registered slightly more agreement with their fathers' values than they did with their mothers'.

Of the eight topics for which students compared their agreement with parental attitudes, dress styles was the area which pointed up the greatest discrepancies among adults and their children. Almost 40 percent of the females said they did not share their mothers' views on clothing styles. Furthermore, slightly more than half of the female students report their views on clothing do not coincide with their fathers' opinions. Male students' views on dress styles do not vary quite as much with parental thinking as do the females' attitudes.

Further evidence that today's students are in overall harmony with their parents' values can be found in the teenagers' reports about how their opinions on these topics have changed in the last two years. In all eight areas, about half of the students reported their views have not

Agreement with Parents

Areas	Agreement with Mother			Agreement with Father		
	% All	% Males	% Females	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Drugs	82.6	80.2	84.8	75.6	76.4	75.0
2. Education	81.2	77.1	84.8	74.6	75.5	73.8
3. Work	80.4	77.3	83.0	73.0	74.6	71.7
4. Politics	77.6	72.4	82.1	69.2	70.6	68.0
5. Choice of Friends	74.4	74.4	74.4	66.8	70.6	63.6
6. Religion	74.0	69.7	77.7	65.5	67.0	64.2
7. Sex	69.4	63.7	74.4	62.4	66.4	59.0
8. Clothing	64.5	68.6	60.9	53.0	57.2	49.3

changed in relation to their parents' attitudes. Of those whose outlook on these topics did change, more students felt their opinions had become *more* like their parents' attitudes.

Regarding education, almost a third of the students said their opinions had grown in the last two years to more closely resemble their mothers' values. Only 10 percent reported these attitudes were now less like their mothers. Likewise, 20 percent of the students said their views on education had grown closer to their fathers' opinions.

Student opinions on drugs, work, and school showed the greatest degree of change in the last two years. And in each of these areas, about 25 to 30 percent of the students said their values had become more like their parents'. The gravitation of student opinion toward their parents' beliefs regarding drugs is particularly noteworthy. In 1974, the number of students who had grown closer in agreement with their parents' drug attitudes over a two-year period equaled the number of students who had drifted away from their parents' sentiments. In marked contrast, the percentage of 1983 students reporting their views on drugs had come closer in line with their parents in the last two years was three times greater than the percentage of students who said their drug beliefs were less like their parents' views.

Only one issue—choice of friends—registered student opinion changes that were almost equally split between moving closer to parents' views and departing from the parents' opinions. About one-fifth of the students said their opinions about their choices in friends had become less like their parents' view. An equal number of students, however, said their beliefs in this area had become more similar to their parents' standards.

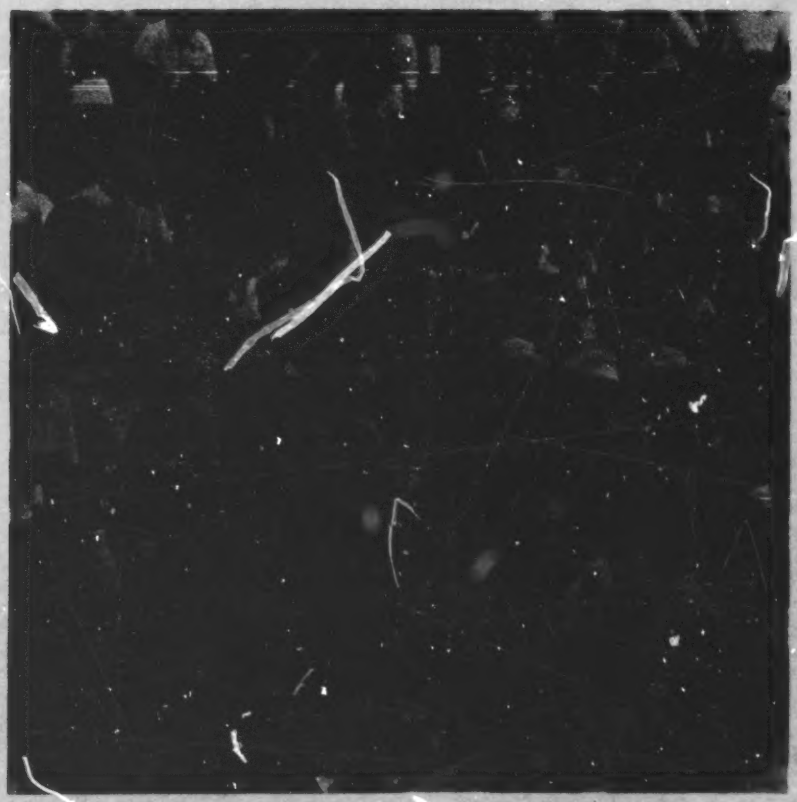
In summary, family life for students today may not be likened to the proverbial "bed of roses," but for most students, the homefront is a relatively quiet setting. The severe, basic philosophical conflicts which often characterized parent-teen relations in the 1960s are not in evidence. Even the generally peaceful home atmosphere of the 1970s seems to have grown calmer for teenagers today.

Changes in Students' Attitudes in Relation to Parents' Attitudes

	Mother's Attitudes			Father's Attitudes		
Areas	% More Like	% Less Like	% No Change	% More Like	% Less Like	% No Change
1. Politics	20.2	10.3	62.5	20.4	10.6	54.5
2. Religion	24.2	17.3	52.4	19.9	17.0	49.2
3. School	32.6	15.8	45.1	27.0	14.4	44.7
4. Friends	20.5	19.2	53.4	16.6	17.8	51.7
5. Marriage/Family	27.3	16.1	50.2	20.1	15.1	50.5
6. Drugs	23.5	8.2	56.6	23.5	8.5	53.8
7. Work	28.8	13.6	50.2	27.3	12.1	47.1
8. Environment	19.4	12.5	61.5	16.8	10.5	58.6

Student battles with their parents have not disappeared by any means, but the furor today is more likely to take the form of skirmishes about parental rules, the ability to communicate between generations, and levels of student independence. Searing differences about major political and social issues do not appear to be as prevalent between parents and students today as they did 20 years ago.

The conflicts between generations persist, but appear to have been reduced in scale and altered in appearance. Students, for example, seem willing to vie for personal indications of independence such as relaxed rules on their choices of friends, dates, and style of dress, but are unlikely to generalize this desire for more responsibility to support for the once-popular issues of student rights and inclusion in decision-making processes which affect youth. Likewise, the 1983 students might argue for their choice in music or hairstyles, but would seldom explain such preferences as trademarks or political statements about their entire generation. Consequently, the parent-teen problems of today are less likely to encompass American society at large and more often are disputes to be aired and resolved within the context of the students' particular family and community.



Chapter 4

Politics and Values

A Mixed Bag of Beliefs

American youth today, in most regards, mirror the basically quiet, introspective attitudes of young people in the 1970s. Politics still does not hold much appeal for students today, although putting some distance on the Watergate era seems to have increased students' trust in their government somewhat. The students remain a fundamentally loyal and supportive—but not rabidly patriotic—group of citizens.

In assessing world and national problems, the students of the 1980s have shuffled last decade's list of issues around and come up with new rankings of importance. Most notable is the students' increased awareness and concern about issues related to nuclear technology and weaponry. Violent crime also has taken a major leap up the students' listing of the nation's most serious problems.

However, strong student agreement on political and social issues is the exception. Only in a very few instances does student opinion coalesce into clear, definitive stances. On most contemporary matters, students are not only divided in their views but also tend to voice only mild agreement with any given position.

Students today exhibit a basic faith in American society. This general, if not profound, level of confidence in their institutions seems to supersede students' willingness to take a strong stand on any given issue. The youth of the '80s are not unconcerned or apolitical; they hold some opinion on virtually all aspects of world, national, and local affairs. But to discover the nature of these views, the young will have to be prodded because, unlike the more vocal youth of 20 years ago, issuing a hue and cry over public issues is seemingly not part of today's student disposition.

Bad Influences

"Drugs" was the number one answer students gave when asked to identify the single worst influence on the lives of young people today.

Almost half of the students cited drugs as the current "worst influence"; no other issue even came close to eliciting this level of response from the students. The second most frequently mentioned negative influence was also related to substance abuse. Alcohol was cited as the worst influence by 10 percent of the students. Male and female students offered the answers "drugs" and "alcohol" with equal frequency.

However, "peer pressure," the third most frequent response, seems to be a greater concern among females than males. Perhaps as a reflection of their perceived susceptibility to peer pressure, 11 percent of the female students report such pressure as the single worst influence on young people; only half this many male students cite peer pressure as such a negative influence.

The students named a host of other issues which, in their view, were harmful to young lives. However, these other "worst influences" were cited by no more than 8 percent of the students. For example, 7 percent of the students said television was the "worst influence" on young people. Another 7 percent report "violence" is the most harmful influence. From 3 to 5 percent of the students claimed either "unemployment," "the threat of war," "parents and elders," or "sex and poor morals" was the greatest negative influence on youth today.

World and National Problems

The threat of nuclear disaster and world war are today's greatest global issues, according to the students' report. Almost a third of the students named nuclear disaster as the current most important world problem; another fifth of the students said the threat of World War III was the greatest problem. If the students' interpretation of "nuclear disaster" includes nuclear attacks as well as nuclear-related accidents,

Worst Influences on Young People Today

influences	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Drugs	46.6	49.4	44.1
2. Alcohol	10.9	9.8	11.8
3. Peer Pressure	9.3	6.9	11.4
4. Television	7.2	6.5	7.9
5. Violence	6.9	6.0	7.7
6. Sex/Poor Morals	5.4	3.6	6.9
7. Parents/Elders	4.3	4.7	4.1
8. Threat of War	3.4	4.5	2.5
9. Unemployment	3.3	1.8	4.6
10. Music	1.9	2.0	1.7
11. Other Mass Media	1.8	1.8	1.7
12. Political Leaders	1.8	2.0	1.5
13. Movies	1.6	1.1	1.9
14. Pornography	.9	.9	1.4
15. Poverty	.6	.9	.4
16. All Others	11.8	11.8	11.8

the percentage of today's students who are very concerned about the possibility of global confrontations increases to almost 50 percent. This widespread concern among youth about war and nuclear disaster has increased remarkably over the last nine years.

In 1974, students said the world's most important problems were overpopulation and environmental preservation. Only a tenth of the 1983 students report overpopulation to be the most pressing global problem. Environmental problems were rated as "most important" by only 6.5 percent of today's students.

These student views on world problems were remarkably consistent, regardless of the students' ages, geographic region, and family income levels. Only a very few other survey issues prompted a similar degree of agreement among the students. Given this uncharacteristically high degree of uniformity in the students' responses about world problems—most notably, nuclear disaster and war—it appears that young people today very strongly believe and fear that some type of global violence is a real possibility within their lifetimes.

In assessing the national scene, students today believe the most important issues facing the United States are unemployment, inflation, and violent crime. More than half of the students said unemployment is not only currently the nation's most important problem but will remain a top-ranked problem in the next two years. A fifth of the students report inflation is America's greatest issue and another fifth of the young people believe violent crime is the top U.S. problem. While the students expect inflation to remain an issue in the next two years, they believe crime will diminish over the next couple of years. Only a tenth of the students expect crime to be the most serious national problem in the next two years.

Most Important National Problems

Problem Areas	Percent of Students	
	Current	During Next Two Years
1. Unemployment	52.0	48.5
2. Inflation	21.1	18.0
3. Violence/Crime	20.8	9.6
4. Poverty	6.4	1.7
5. Health and Welfare	5.5	.7
6. Energy	4.9	3.5
7. Social Security	3.9	3.9
8. Sex Discrimination	3.1	.7
9. Ecology	2.9	1.0
10. Racial Tension	2.6	.2
11. Quality of American Workmanship	2.5	1.1
12. Consumerism	2.3	.4
13. Racial Discrimination	2.2	.2
14. Pornography	1.8	.3

Most Important World Problems

Problem Areas	% Students
1. Nuclear Disaster	31.7
2. Threat of World War III	21.3
3. Poverty	15.1
4. Overpopulation	10.5
5. Environmental Problems	6.5
6. Energy	4.3
7. Unemployment	1.5
8. Inflation/Economy	1.0

Only a handful of students cited other issues as most important, indicating the students' substantial agreement on these three top-ranked issues: unemployment, inflation, and violent crime. Regardless of their age, region of the nation, and family income, the students were in agreement on this rating of the nation's most important problems.

Nine years ago, the students named an almost entirely different set of problems facing the country. Certainly in reaction to the then-recent Watergate scandal, students listed politics as the top-ranked major national problem. Ecology was the second most frequently cited problem in 1974, with more than half of the students citing it as a major U.S. concern. Fewer than 3 percent of the 1983 students said ecology was one of the current most important national problems.

The economy, unemployment, and inflation are major problem areas which have spanned the last 10 years, according to the students. About half the students in 1974, and a similar percentage of 1983 students, listed unemployment as among the nation's major problems. The 1974 students, however, expected unemployment to be less of a problem by 1976; only a fourth of the 1974 students believed unemployment would be a major problem "in the next two years." Students today do not share the same kind of optimism about solving unemployment problems. About 52 percent of the 1983 students view unemployment as the most important U.S. problem today and 48 percent of the students predict it will be a serious problem in 1985.

Violent crime, the third most frequently mentioned problem among 1983 students, was barely on the minds of students in 1974; fewer than half of 1 percent of the students ranked crime as a major national issue. Conversely, more than a third of the 1974 students said "racial tension" was a serious problem; in 1983, fewer than 3 percent of the students list it as an important national issue. To the extent that the students' ranking of national problems reflect their own concerns, it appears that today's youth are worried a great deal more about violence and crime while viewing racial tensions as almost nonexistent.

Likewise, consumerism was regarded as a significant issue among students in the 1970s, but now fewer than 3 percent of the students cite consumer affairs and rights as a minor national concern. In the '70s, a substantial amount of media and public attention was paid to the

relatively new emphasis on consumerism, but almost 10 years later, consumer advocacy has become an accepted part of the American landscape and therefore, students today may have little reason to view consumer-related matters as national concerns.

Voting and Faith in Government

The mistrust young people held for American politics following the Watergate era appears to have diminished slightly. While still holding a skeptical, arms-length view of U.S. politics, students today seem to feel more confident about their government institutions.

Despite traditionally low voter turnout among young people, today's students overwhelmingly indicate they intend to faithfully exercise their voting rights. More than three-quarters of the students say they, when eligible, will vote in most elections. Almost all of the remaining 25 percent also indicate they intend to vote but only in elections where the issues or candidates are of particular interest to them. Only 5 percent of the students said they would not be bothered about voting. Interestingly, students who reported making lower grades were more likely to be among the future's nonvoters than those students with higher records of academic performance.

Most students' involvement in the political process will begin and end with voting, they contend. Only about 6 percent of the students report they would be "very interested" in running for an elected office. Another 30 percent qualify their opinion by saying they "might" be willing to run for an office. However, even though almost two-thirds of today's students show very little desire for active political involvement, the interest level in this area has risen in the last nine years. Only a sixth of the Watergate-hardened teens in 1974 said they would be willing to seek elected office.

Furthermore, careers in politics now seem to be more appealing to the female students of the '80s. In equal numbers, today's male and female students report they might run for elected office. In 1974, the number of males interested in political offices outnumbered females by a two-to-one margin.

Student opinion today reflects a number of other signs that youth's faith in government has been restored to some degree in the last decade. More students today believe that being rich is not necessary to get elected to high office; fewer feel that governmental corruption and dishonesty is widespread; and more claim that dissent and loyalty to one's country were not mutually exclusive.

In 1974, half of the teenagers agreed, at least to some extent, that personal wealth was a prerequisite for getting elected to public office. However, today, when campaign costs are considerably higher than they were nine years ago, fewer students subscribe to the notion that only the wealthy can get elected. Among the 1983 students, 40 percent said wealth was a requirement for election; the other 60 percent hold to

the American ideal that, rich or poor, any person can become president of the United States.

Corruption and dishonesty is widespread in American government, claimed almost three-fourths of the students in 1974. Today, that view is still held by a majority of students, but the percentage has dropped below two-thirds. Older students, however, are more likely to believe government corruption is widespread than their younger counterparts. Older students, more than younger, also tend to feel wealth is a needed ingredient for election. Additionally, more students from lower-income families claim that government corruption and dishonesty is widespread than do students from more affluent backgrounds.

Just as some of the philosophical wounds from the troubled Nixon years are showing signs of healing, the attitudes underlying the once-popular slogan, "America—love it or leave it," seem to have faded over the last decade. In 1974, a fifth of the students said a person could not both disagree with the government and be considered loyal to the country. Another third of the students reported they had no opinion on the matter of political dissent and national loyalty. Current student opinion on this issue more closely resembles the 1960s youth viewpoint; a solid 95 percent of the teenagers today agree that loyalty to country and disagreements with government policy do not cancel one another out.

Republicans, Democrats, and Undecided

If today's students were to maintain the political party affiliations they have professed in 1983 through their adult years, all future elections will be decided by the undeclared voters. Forty percent of the students said they were undecided about which political party best represented their own political views. Ten percent of the students report they are either "independents" or identify with a party other than the Republicans or Democrats. The two major parties were each claimed by a quarter of the students.

The so-called "gender gap" in the Republican party may be borne out in some measure among today's students. Significantly more male students than female students reported themselves as Republicans, whereas the student Democrats were composed of males and females in equal numbers. However, given that more females than males were undecided about party affiliation, the currently lower rate of female student identification with the Republicans may only be a function of time and will pick up as these "undecideds" approach eligibility for their first election.

Liberal, Conservative Labels Rejected

Students today, like those surveyed nine years ago, are more apt to tag their views as "middle of the road" than either "liberal" or "conservative." A third of the students said the mid-range best described

their political dispositions, while only 13 percent identified their opinions as "liberal" and only 14 percent dubbed their politics "conservative."

In 1974, a majority of the students said that the "middle of the road" label best described their overall political viewpoint, but in 1984, even the "middle" couldn't command a majority of students. A total of 40 percent of today's students said they couldn't place their views on the liberal-conservative range at all, because they didn't know if their perspectives were liberal, conservative, or something else altogether.

Just as more male students than female students identify with the Republican party, more male students also depict their opinions as conservative. And just as more females than males were undecided about party affinity, more females than males didn't know how to classify their views.

The younger students did show a slightly greater tendency to label their politics "conservative." However, conservative designations among the students were neither related to particular regions of the country, nor were they more prevalent among students from higher family incomes.

The Reagan Administration

In early 1983, at the time of the survey's administration, the current presidential administration did not enjoy a very high level of support among teens. Only about 12 percent of the students said they were "very confident" of President Ronald Reagan's ability to guide the country toward a better life for all Americans. However, a little more than half of the students reported they were "somewhat" confident in the Reagan administration. One-third of the students gave the president a vote of no confidence.

These various levels of support for the administration were equally reported by males and females and were not related to any particular part of the nation. However, more students from families with higher incomes claimed confidence in the president than did students from

less affluent backgrounds. Additionally, younger students, perhaps more out of a traditional respect for the office of president rather than support for Reagan in particular, indicated they had more confidence in the administration than did older students.

Serving One's Country

Joining the armed services apparently has not gained in popularity among students during the last decade. Three-quarters of the students today—the same percentage as in 1974—report they either will definitely not or probably not enlist for military duty.

A mere 5 percent of the students replied with a "yes, positively" when asked if they would volunteer for the armed services. Another 20 percent of the students gave a qualified affirmative to the question of military duty, saying they would "probably volunteer."

Seemingly, students do perceive the military as a future option for those youth whose academic records might narrow their chances for entering colleges or universities. The likelihood of students' volunteering for military service goes up as their grades go down. Of the students who reported making mostly *A*s, only about 14 percent said they were favorably inclined to join the armed forces. Twenty-seven percent of the *B* students claim they will definitely or probably enlist. The figure jumps up again among the students making mostly *C*s; a full third of these students view military service as a serious option for themselves. However, as students approach graduation age, their feelings about volunteering become less favorable—perhaps because other postsecondary alternatives have materialized or because making such decisions are no longer merely speculations, but real decisions about their future lives.

Despite the majority of students' continuing rejection of military service as a personal post-high-school option, a little more than half of the students believe that draft registration is necessary, even during peacetime. Burning draft registration cards may well have been one of the more visible political statements of youth in the 1960s, but at least 50 percent of today's students—those who support peacetime registration—would be unlikely to raise a word of protest about their registration cards, much less burn them.

Times do change. Even support for the draft itself has increased among young people in the last nine years. In 1974, only a quarter of the students said a military draft is necessary to keep U.S. defense strong; today almost a third of the students voice that belief.

As an alternative to military service, discussion has circulated in the nation about setting up a system of mandatory national service with agencies such as the Peace Corps or VISTA. Although the proposal has surfaced periodically for the last 15 years, students remain unconvinced of its merits. About 60 percent of the 1974 students rejected the notion of such required service; today, a little more than 62 percent do not believe that a mandatory term of social service is a good idea.

Religious Practices

When religious matters are contrasted with students' virtual preoccupation with issues regarding their education and future careers, school and work seem to far outstrip religion in terms of everyday importance to young people today. However, the students contend that religion does play a significant role in their lives.

One-third of the students report that religion is a "very important" part of their existence, and more than 40 percent indicate religion is "somewhat" important to them. Fewer than 7 percent of the teenagers claim religion is not at all important to them. In contrast, only 50 percent of the 1974 students reported that they considered themselves "religious."

Religion was rated equally important by today's male students as it was by female students, however, students making higher grades tend to consider religion more important than do those whose grades are lower. Of all the regions in the country, the South seems to have more students who view religion as important to their lives. Likewise, students in rural areas and small towns see religion as more important than do those from larger cities.

Attendance at religious services seems to have risen substantially in the last decade. About 65 percent of today's students report that they regularly go to church or other religious services. Only a quarter of the students in 1974 said they were regular participants in such services.

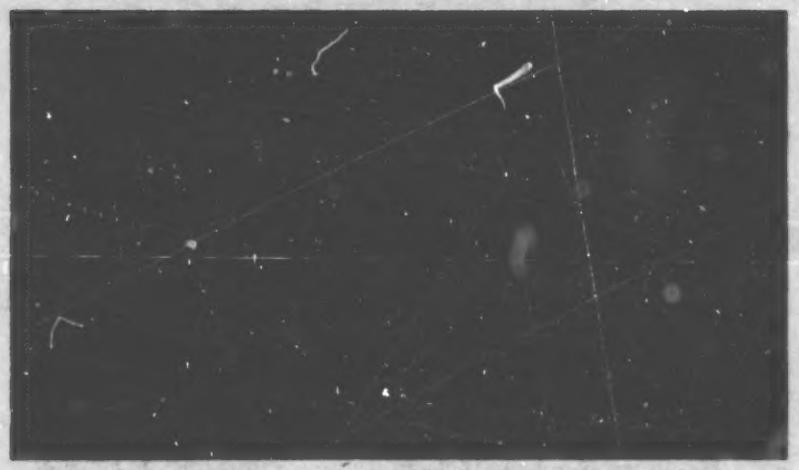
Despite the apparent increase in religious affairs among today's youth, the students generally disapprove of churches using "their influence to affect political issues." About 47 percent of the students did not support the involvement of religious institutions in political matters. Religious-based groups such as the Moral Majority did find some student support for their political actions.

Views on Contemporary Issues

Today's student viewpoints on current issues are truly a mixed bag of political thought. The students seldom exhibit adherence to any one particular set of political perspectives. The youth of 1983 declined to describe themselves as fitting neatly along the liberal-conservative spectrum and their diverse amalgam of opinions lends evidence to their claim of being "neither fish nor fowl." Their responses to a series of questions on contemporary affairs indicate that students today are a composite of political outlooks—a measure of liberalism, an equal portion of conservatism, a substantial helping of "middle ground," and a bit of "undecided."

Social Issues

The topics of health, jobs, and housing find today's students voicing opinions closer to the traditionally "liberal" outlook—more so than



on any other subject areas. One possible explanation for students' generally "left of center" leanings on these matters must not be overlooked. The survey questions on these topics were phrased without mention of financial costs. For example, the students were asked to report their level of agreement with the statement, "There should be a guaranteed annual income to insure every U.S. citizen a decent and adequate standard of living." Without identifying who should underwrite the provision of this income, this survey item might appear to mean: "Do you or don't you agree that all citizens should have a decent and adequate standard of living?" Given this interpretation, the level of agreement would naturally be quite high.

However, this explanation notwithstanding, students do report strong support not only for a guaranteed annual income, but also for a national health plan and subsidized housing. More than 70 percent of the students expressed agreement with the idea of providing a guaranteed annual income for all citizens. A total of 84 percent of the students subscribed to the statement: "Adequate health care for all should be provided through a national health plan." Additionally, 64 percent of the students registered their support for their government providing "safe, decent, and sanitary housing for all Americans, whatever the costs."

Although the financial resources to pay for these housing, income, and health care programs were not identified in the particular statements presented to the survey participants, the students do report their general agreement that money should be spent on social needs rather than military needs. About 59 percent of the students voiced this preference. A comparable percentage of the 1974 students also shared this view. In the "guns versus butter" debate, it appears that the students choose "butter."

However, a majority of students also simultaneously hold a belief that seems to run contrary to their choice of spending money on social

rather than military needs. About 54 percent of the students feel nuclear weapons are necessary to protect the United States. Judging by their expressed support for a number of costly military and social programs, students apparently share in the politicians' perpetual quandary of how to sort out all of the nation's competing demands on its fiscal resources.

The students are fairly cohesive in their views on one issue: unemployment. Not only do today's youth most frequently cite unemployment as the nation's top problem, recent years of high unemployment rates seem to have prompted today's students to adopt a traditionally "liberal" point of view regarding people's abilities to secure jobs. More than 65 percent of the students do not agree that "if people are unable to find jobs, it is their own fault." Only 5 percent of today's students strongly believe that unemployed people have no one to blame but themselves.

Criminal Justice

Student viewpoints about issues related to criminal justice also reflect a mixture of "liberal" and "conservative" perspectives. Almost 70 percent of the students expressed support for handgun control legislation—a stance normally identified as a primarily "liberal" issue. Forty-one percent of the students said they "strongly" favor laws controlling handgun sales and ownership, compared to only 15 percent of the students who claimed "strong disagreement" with the enactment of such laws.

On the more conservative side of public opinion, today's youth very definitely believe that the death penalty is an acceptable form of punishment for some crimes. Almost half of the students characterized their support of the death penalty as a very firmly held position. Fewer than 10 percent of the students are strongly opposed to the use of the death penalty in some instances.

John Hinkley's 1981 assassination attempt on the life of President Reagan and Hinkley's subsequent acquittal by reason of insanity, brought the judicial system's practices regarding insanity pleas in felony cases under heavy public debate. That heated public discussion apparently did not leave today's youth untouched. An overwhelming 92 percent of the students report the nation needs stricter laws to control the use of the insanity plea.

Current student concern about violent crime is evident in the youth's ranking of crime as the third most important issue facing the country. Their strong defense of stricter laws governing handguns and the insanity plea and their support of the death penalty also indicates that young people today are more concerned with not only the incidence of crime but its prevention and punishment as well.

Education

The students were asked their views on three current issues facing

schools around the country: book censorship, bilingual education, and community control of education.

Students appear to have very strong views on who should make the policy decisions regarding their education. The local community should be responsible for its schools, the students contend. Almost 70 percent of the students believe local control of schools is the "best way to provide the best education." Consistent with this support of community rule over education, almost 99 percent of the students say local school officials should be able to censor the books and materials to be used in their schools. Very surprisingly, not one student surveyed disagreed with this position; the remaining 1.5 percent of the students offered no opinion on this topic.

Four-fifths of today's youth also support offering bilingual education in areas where a high percentage of families are non-English-speaking. Students from the northern region of the country gave bilingual education the greatest vote of support. Curiously, however, the least enthusiastic proponents of bilingual education were students in the West—states which have among the highest populations of non-English-speaking people.

Moral Issues

The issues which most severely split the opinions of students today, are also the issues that are most divisive among the public at large. Issues dealing with morality, sex, and drugs are concerns which evoke the students' greatest range of views.

For example, the student viewpoint on sex education is divided between those who feel parents should take responsibility for their childrens' education in this matter and those who believe sex education is a legitimate province of the schools' curricula. Half of the students cast their support in favor of the schools' playing a role in providing sex education; 35 percent of the students believe their parents should handle sex education matters. Fourteen percent either were undecided on the issue or offered no opinion.

Perhaps the single societal issue which divides student opinion into strongly opposite camps is abortion. In 1974, student viewpoint was torn over the legalization of abortions and today's students remain similarly at odds. About 52 percent of 1983 students express either "mild" or "strong" agreement that abortions should remain legalized. On the opposing side, 47 percent of the students do not support legalization of abortions. Very few students take no stance on this volatile issue; fewer than 1 percent did not report an opinion. Unlike many other issues, students do not hesitate in taking the extreme polar views on abortion. More than half the students report strong agreement or disagreement on this topic; for today's youth, abortion is not likely to elicit very many "middle of the road" views.

Although not regarded as an explosive issue like abortion, por-

nography is also a topic which finds student attitudes divided. About 44 percent of the students believe pornographic materials should be legally available to adults. However, the majority of students (54 percent) disagree and in this instance, the students reporting the strongest views are on the dissenters' side. Almost a third of the students strongly oppose allowing pornography to be legally available to adults. In contrast, only 10 percent of the students who support adults' legal access to pornography report this view as "strongly" felt.

Students are also divided in their views on the appropriate legal drinking age. A slight majority of students support raising the drinking age to 21 in all states; 43 percent oppose hiking the legal age. This issue is another instance about which few students have no opinion; fewer than 1 percent did not register their stance on the drinking age issue.

The legalization of marijuana is opposed by a majority (59 percent) of today's youth. However, no students reported that they "strongly" felt marijuana should not be legalized; the students characterized their opposition to legalization as "mild." About a quarter of the students believe that marijuana should be a legally sanctioned drug and 14 percent of the students are either undecided on this issue or offered no viewpoint.

Views on Contemporary Issues

	Percent of Students				
	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Answer
I. Social Issues					
a. Money should be spent on social needs rather than military needs.	22.1	35.8	28.1	10.5	3.4
b. Adequate health care for all should be provided through a national health plan.	43.9	41.0	9.1	2.8	3.2
c. There should be a guaranteed annual income to insure every citizen of the U.S. a decent and adequate standard of living.	31.1	40.0	15.7	10.4	2.8
d. The government must provide safe, decent, and sanitary housing for all Americans, whatever the cost.	23.9	38.6	23.7	11.0	2.9
e. If people are unable to find jobs, it is their own fault.	5.3	22.5	36.3	30.6	5.4
II. Military Issues					
a. Nuclear weapons are necessary to protect the U.S.	21.2	32.6	22.4	21.3	2.5
b. A military draft is necessary to keep U.S. defense strong.	23.5	8.5	53.8	0	14.3
c. Draft registration should not be required during peacetime.	16.6	17.8	51.7	0	13.9
d. It would be a good idea to have a system of national service for both sexes which would require spending at least two years with such agencies as the Peace Corps, VISTA, etc.	7.1	27.1	35.5	27.0	3.3

	Percent of Students				
	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Answer
III. Criminal Justice					
a. The death penalty is an acceptable form of punishment for some crimes.	48.6	29.8	10.6	9.3	1.8
b. We need stricter laws to control the use of the insanity plea.	67.3	24.5	5.6	1.9	.8
c. Laws should be enacted to control hand-gun sales and ownership.	41.3	27.0	15.6	14.7	1.7
IV. Education					
a. Community control of schools is the best way to provide the best education.	21.2	48.0	21.0	7.1	2.7
b. A bilingual education program should be offered in areas where a high percentage of families are non-English-speaking.	36.3	43.1	11.8	5.9	3.0
c. Local school officials should be able to censor the books and materials to be used in their schools.	63.9	34.5	0	0	1.5
V. Moral Issues					
a. Sex education should be done by parents, not in the schools.	20.1	15.1	50.5	0	14.3
b. Abortion should remain legalized.	21.8	30.4	15.6	31.6	.6
c. Pornographic materials should be legally available to adults.	10.3	33.9	23.9	30.6	1.3
d. The legal drinking age should be raised to 21 in all states.	34.5	22.0	20.6	22.0	.9
e. The purchase and use of marijuana should be legalized.	16.8	10.5	58.6	0	14.0

Chapter 5

Future Moves

College, Careers, and Marriage in The Forecast

Despite considerable fears about violence, unemployment, and the threat of nuclear catastrophe, the youth of today look to their individual futures with a good measure of optimism. For their personal lives, they predict college degrees, prosperous careers, stable marriages, and an average of 2.4 children. The teens of the '80s place a high priority on education and careers, but seem to have tempered some of the dogged ambitions evident in their counterparts of the '70s. Marked changes are obvious in young women's attitudes toward their careers, but apparently today's female students are hanging on to earlier notions about marriages and their future families. While filled with high hopes about the years before them, today's students are not laboring under any misconceptions about what they must do to realize their aspirations. They admit hard work lies ahead and claim they are willing to make the sacrifices needed to reach their goals.

After High School

Once the high school cap and gown is retired and the diploma framed and hung, what do the current secondary students plan to do? "Get some more schooling" is the students' overwhelming answer.

Despite reports of dwindling college enrollments, the majority of 1983 students report they intend to enroll in four-year universities and colleges. This figure of 54 percent reflects a substantial jump in the 1974 rates; nine years ago only slightly more than a third of the students said they planned to enter four-year colleges. Other forms of postsecondary education are also popular among the students of 1983. Fifteen percent of the teens report they will be going to junior colleges upon graduation from high school and another 15 percent have plans for enrolling in vocational or training schools. In total, almost 85 percent of today's students intend to be students again in the near future. Total figures for 1974 youths revealed that about 60 percent said

they would be continuing with some type of postsecondary training.

Although pursuing some type of postsecondary education, particularly in four-year colleges, is the stated goal of many students today, a university education remains within easier reach of the students from higher-income families. Students from less affluent homes will enter the job market in disproportionately higher numbers than those from wealthier backgrounds.

Including those students who plan to combine work with some after-high-school education, almost 37 percent of today's youth will seek employment upon their graduation. A changing economic picture in the last decade apparently has forced more students to get jobs straight out of high school. In 1974, only 29 percent of the students listed employment as part of their immediate plans upon graduation.

More marriages also seem to be part of the near-future plans of today's youth. In 1974, fewer than 6 percent of the students cited marriage as among their immediate plans after high school; today, 13 percent predict they will be going to the altar soon after high school. Almost twice as many females as males report that marriage is included in their upcoming plans. Seventeen percent of the female students list marriage as a short-range plan, compared to only 9 percent of the male students.

The Next Five Years

Work and school will be the two most important areas of concern for today's students during the next five years, the teens report. School matters understandably predominated among the younger students. Work concerns surpassed education as most important among the older students. Even though a majority of students plan to continue their education after high school, the mounting importance older students lend to career issues indicates that high school students may frequently regard postsecondary learning in terms of its effects on job matters. The 1970s student emphasis on jobs and careers seems to have been passed on to today's youth.

The importance youth place on work and careers was borne out repeatedly in students' responses about their future goals and as-

Immediate Plans After High School

Plans	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Four-Year College	54.5	51.0	57.6
2. Get a Job	36.6	33.4	39.3
3. Go to Junior College	14.8	12.0	17.1
4. Go to Training/Vocational School	14.8	16.3	13.5
5. Get Married	13.3	8.9	17.1
6. Join Armed Forces	11.1	18.5	4.6
7. Travel	9.4	6.7	11.8
8. Join Volunteer Organization	.9	1.6	.4

Success Formula of the Average Student

Category	Relative Importance		
	All	Males	Females
1. Work and Career	15.1	15.9	14.5
2. Immediate Family	18.2	18.4	18.1
3. Personal Development & Satisfaction	14.6	14.1	15.0
4. Extended Family	14.5	13.3	15.5
5. Friendships	19.3	20.4	18.3
6. Religious/Spiritual Activities	10.6	10.4	10.7
7. Social Influence	7.7	7.5	7.9

pirations. In one question, the students were asked to construct their own "personal success formulas" by assigning points to the life areas they viewed as most important to them. The seven areas were: personal development and satisfaction, immediate family, extended family, friendships, work and career, religious and spiritual activities, and social influence.

"Work and career," on the average, was viewed as the most important ingredient in the students' success formulas. Both males and females ranked this area as most important, however, the male students awarded more "importance points" to this factor than did the females. For the females, "immediate family" was viewed as a very close second to the "work and career" area.

"Social influence" was the lowest ranked of the seven success formula factors by both males and females. This relative unconcern among students about their possible influence on society seems to support the image of today's students as more concerned about securing their individual futures than "making a mark on the world."

Students' preoccupation with careers and jobs was highlighted again when the teens were asked to identify "the one thing they want out of life." "Career success" was the most frequently given response.

However, depicting today's youth as driven by an overwhelming desire for career achievement would be a false picture. While the 1980s youth do place a high priority on their future jobs, other factors play major roles in their visions about their adult lives. For example, the less definable response, happiness, ranked as a close second in students' ratings of the "one thing they want out of life." Career success was identified by almost 28 percent of the students as the "one thing" they most wanted, but happiness was mentioned by a comparable proportion of students—26 percent.

Additionally, "marriage and family" took a not-too-distant third place in the students' ranking of life goals. Almost 21 percent of the students cited marriage and family as their single most important objective for their lives.

Males and females differed surprisingly little in what they said they wanted out of life. The did not differ in the frequency with which they mentioned career and family-related aspirations, but females cited happiness almost twice as frequently as did males.

Other admirable, idealistic generalities such as love, peace of mind, and freedom and independence were among the most infrequently mentioned life goals.

Hard Work and Sacrifices

To attain the goals they want, today's students intend to work hard and make some concessions. About 96 percent of the students said they would either work "very hard" or "moderately hard" to get what they wanted out of life. This high degree of dedication may be a reflection of what the students believe to be necessary in order to "reach their stars." Eighty-five percent of the students believe that most adults have worked very hard to achieve their own goals and the students may feel that they will have to make a comparable effort in order to realize their desires.

Young people today are well aware that to achieve their life objectives, they may be required to make some significant sacrifices. Most notably, the students anticipate they will have to give up some degree of their spare-time activities. The next most frequently cited sacrifice the students feel they might have to make are social activities and money.

Interestingly, the fourth most frequently cited sacrifice was self-centeredness and the female students mentioned this area almost twice as often as male students. This disproportionately offered response from female students may be an indication that social pressures on women to subordinate their own desires to those of others are still at work in the present generation of teenagers.

Butchers, Bakers, Computer Operators

Just as video games were not a part of students' entertainment less than a decade ago, computer science careers were almost unheard-of employment options. However, today, computer-related jobs are students' number one career choice. Almost 17 percent of the students said they were interested in pursuing such careers. The second most frequently mentioned occupational area—cited by 7.3 percent of the students—was non-management business careers.

While doctors and lawyers still rank high on students' job preference lists, these areas are not the very popular choices they were 10 years ago; the ascent of computers and electronic technology on the job market apparently has lured some students away from the more traditional professional fields.

While some young women today seem to be moving away from traditionally female-dominated occupations, the progress is slow. Most female students still indicate interest primarily in so-called "women's work"—jobs such as nursing, secretarial work, and teaching. Medical doctors, however, appear to have been the breakthrough occupation for women. In 1974, slightly more women than men expressed interest in becoming physicians; today, aspiring female doctors outnumber would-be male doctors by a two-to-one margin.

Additionally, young women are showing more interest in the legal profession. Ten years ago, the number of young men wishing to become attorneys was triple the number of females with similar goals. Today, young women cite law careers as their choice of profession more often than the male students. Likewise, female students show an increased interest in securing careers in other formerly male-dominated fields such as business management, mathematics, and communications.

The One Thing That Students Want Out of Life

Items	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Career Success	27.6	26.5	28.5
2. Happiness	25.7	18.0	32.4
3. Marriage/Family	20.8	18.5	22.7
4. General Success	9.8	12.0	7.9
5. Financial Success	7.0	9.1	5.2
6. Long/Enjoyable Life	4.2	6.0	2.7
7. Education	3.2	3.1	3.2
8. Religious Satisfaction	3.2	3.1	3.3
9. Friends	3.1	3.1	3.1
10. Personal Success	3.1	2.5	3.7
11. Health	2.9	2.9	2.9
12. Love	2.4	.9	3.7
13. Peace of Mind	.6	1.1	.2
14. Home	.4	.5	.4
15. Freedom/Independence	.4	.7	.2
16. All Others	5.3	7.1	3.7

A reverse trend is not evident among today's students: young men do not appear to have much interest in breaking into any of the career fields historically associated with women. One major reason for this reluctance, of course, is the continuing pattern of lower salaries for employees in these fields.

Notably missing from the students' list of favored career choices were basic science occupations such as chemists, biologists, and physicists. Apparently, the recent push among educators to revive student interest in scientific study and careers has not yet had time to produce any significant numbers of student "converts" to the scientific professions.

Salary Expectations

The high career goals and determination of today's youth is mirrored in their expectations regarding their future earning power. On the average, students expect to earn about $16,500 a year at their first full-time job after completing their schooling. Given that the vast majority of the students intend to pursue some form of postsecondary education, this estimate of a first-time salary is probably not unreasonable. However, in projecting their incomes 10 years from now and at the peaks of their careers, the students (if inflation is discounted) make forecasts that, if realized, will place them among the highest paid workers in the nation.

By 1993, for example, students predict they will receive an overall average salary of $37,400. In estimating their paychecks once they reach the peak of their careers, students project they will be earning an average of $64,300. Assuming the students did not account for any effects of inflation, these projected incomes would afford today's students quite comfortable standards of living. If viewed as reflections of young people's level of determination and ambition, such salary forecasts indicate that most students have a good measure of faith in their abilities to succeed in their chosen career fields.

Disturbing, however, is the consistent pattern of lower salary expectations among female students. At each career level for which the students projected their earnings, females anticipate earning from $2,000 to $8,000 less than male students. These lower expectations may reflect young women's realization of the continuing disparities in wages between the sexes. A more unsettling explanation for the young women's lower income projections is that females—even before they

Salary Expectations

Time	Average Salary		
	All	Males	Females
1. First Full-Time Job	$16,500	$18,500	$14,700
2. Ten Years from Now	37,400	40,000	35,200
3. Peak of Career	64,300	68,200	60,900

graduate from high school—have internalized some feelings that their work contributions may not merit a pay rate comparable to men's salaries. To the extent that expectations can become self-fulfilling prophecies, female students may be inadvertently putting themselves at a disadvantage by projecting future salaries lower than those of male students.

Working Mothers

The current student generation is not particularly supportive of careers for women who have very young children. While 60 percent of the students believe that women with pre-school children can successfully combine *part-time* employment and child care responsibilities, less than 20 percent of the students feel that full-time jobs and care of small children are compatible.

Despite the growing number of mothers in the work force and the increasing economic necessity for them to hold down jobs, more than 20 percent of the students—30 percent of the males—contended that women should not be employed at all before their children enter school.

Wedding Bells and Diapers

"Traditional" is the watchword for students' attitudes about marriage and children. For all the public fanfare about high divorce rates and the "single's lifestyle," most students today report they will get married and have children.

The ideal age for marriage is 22, according to the students. On the average, the teenagers believe men should marry about seven months after their twenty-second birthday and women should marry a few months before their twenty-second birthday. These "ideal" ages for marriage, as reported by the students, have increased over the last decade. The 1974 students reported that men and women should marry about a year earlier than the current generation of teenagers recommend.

A substantial majority of the students believe that people who get married before their twentieth birthdays are more likely to get divorced than people who marry later in life. Not quite 30 percent of the students thought that such marriages were neither more nor less likely to end in divorce.

While the difference between 22 years of age (the students' choice of an ideal marriage age) and 20 years of age (the point below which students believe the likelihood of divorce increases) may seem unsubstantial to most adults, this issue must be viewed from the secondary school students' perspective. For teenagers, graduation from college or reaching the age of 21 generally signifies the transition point into adulthood. Serious "adult" decisions, such as marriage, may seem appropriate for 21 and 22-year-olds, therefore, because from the teenagers' vantage point, people of this age are truly adults and should be capable of determining their own life choices.

Careers That Students Are Interested in Pursuing

Careers	% All	% Males	% Females
1. Computer Related	16.7	22.9	11.3
2. Business, Non-Management	7.3	2.9	11.2
3. Miscellaneous Medical	6.7	4.5	.7
4. Medical Doctor	6.6	4.2	8.7
5. Teaching	5.6	1.1	9.4
6. Law	4.6	4.0	5.0
7. Engineering	4.2	7.1	1.7
8. Accounting	3.8	2.0	5.4
9. Professional Sports	3.8	6.9	1.2
10. Business Management	3.1	2.7	3.5
11. Nursing	2.9	.2	5.2
12. Psychology	2.6	1.3	3.6
13. Architecture	2.5	3.3	1.7
14. Mechanic	2.5	5.4	0
15. Music	2.5	1.3	3.5
16. Cosmetology	2.4	0	4.4
17. Construction Trades	2.3	4.7	.2
18. Art	1.9	1.6	2.1
19. Modeling	1.9	.2	3.3
20. Interior Design	1.8	.2	3.1
21. Military Service	1.5	2.7	.4
22. Acting/Theater	1.3	.5	2.1
23. Communications/Media	1.3	.7	1.9
24. Law Enforcement	1.3	2.0	.8
25. Truck Driver	1.3	2.5	.4
26. Wife/Mother	1.3	0	2.5
27. Farming	1.1	2.2	.2
28. Fashion Design	1.1	0	2.1
29. Politics/Government	.9	1.3	.6
30. Writing	.9	.7	1.2
31. Mathematics	.8	.5	1.2
32. Photography	.8	.9	.8
33. Social Services	.7	.5	1.0
34. Child Care	.6	0	1.2
35. Dance	.6	0	1.2
36. Travel/Tourism	.4	0	.8
37. All Others	16.1	18.7	13.9

Students' rather traditional views on marriage also extend to their attitudes about having children. Almost all students report they will at least consider raising a family and for a little more than half the students, having two children is the ideal number. However, almost another quarter of the students would like to have three children and 15 percent want four or more.

Only about 5 percent of the students said they wanted just one child. And despite a reported trend in couples who remain childless out of choice, only 5 percent of today's youth would opt for that decision. On the average, today's teenagers indicate they want 2.4 children, which is about the same as the current national birthrate.

The Ideal Age for Marriage

Age	Marriage Age for Women			Marriage Age for Men		
	% All	% Males	% Females	% All	% Males	% Females
1. 18 or Under	2.8	3.3	2.3	.6	.9	.4
2. 19 Years	8.2	7.3	8.9	3.2	3.8	5.9
3. 20 Years	20.7	22.7	18.9	12.4	14.3	10.8
4. 21 Years	17.5	19.2	16.0	17.8	18.0	17.5
5. 22 Years	14.6	12.5	16.4	13.5	13.4	13.7
6. 23 Years	13.4	13.4	13.5	13.8	13.4	14.3
7. 24 Years	10.6	11.4	10.0	13.8	13.8	13.9
8. 25 Years	6.6	5.1	7.9	15.7	13.1	17.9
9. 26 and Over	5.1	4.0	6.0	8.5	8.5	8.5
Average Age (yrs)		21.8	21.7 21.9		22.7	22.5 22.8

Like the female students in 1974, today's young women still tend to want larger families than men want. Although the difference is slight (women want an average of 2.5 children and men want an average of 2.3 children), the female students' desire for more children lends further support to the view that the '80s generation of teenagers subscribe to a very traditional outlook on "home and hearth."

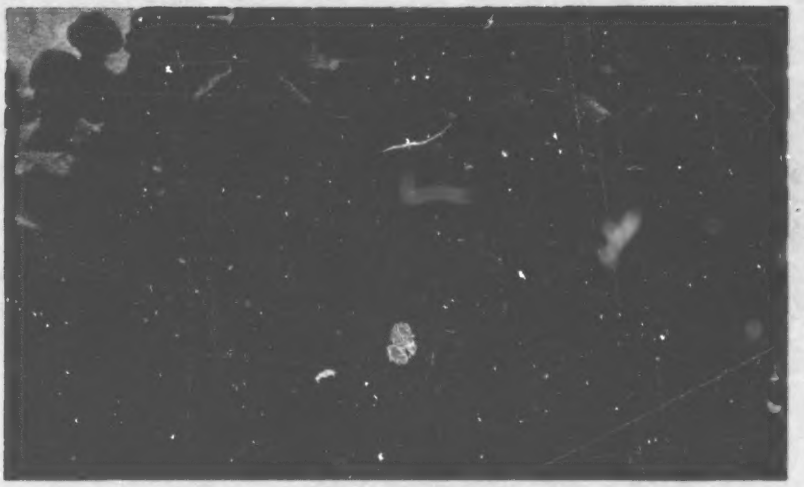
That desire for a family life reminiscent of earlier generations is also revealed in students' opinions on childrearing. In fact, two-thirds of the students said they would not raise their children any differently than they themselves had been raised. Youth today voice agreement with their parents' attitudes on many issues, but the students' majority-held claim of satisfaction with their own upbringing is especially convincing evidence that the intergenerational disputes of the 1960s have dramatically subsided.

Differences in Raising Children

	% All	% Males	% Females
Would Raise Children Differently	33.4	26.2	39.1
Would Not Raise Children Differently	66.6	73.3	60.9

Areas of Difference	Percent of Students Indicating a Difference		
	Both	Males	Females
1. Give Increased Responsibility	43.3	38.3	46.3
2. Improve Interactions	40.3	28.3	47.3
3. Create Better Emotional Climate	18.0	14.2	20.2
4. Provide More Guidance	13.3	17.5	10.8
5. Miscellaneous	23.5	25.0	22.7

Even the third of the students who report they will alter some of their parents' practices when it comes to raising their own children do not intend to adopt dramatically different changes. Most frequently,



these students said the differences they would make would be related to giving more responsibility to their children. The students said this increased responsibility might include being less strict, allowing children to make more decisions, being more trusting, and being less protective.

The second most frequent change in parenting the students would make when rearing their own children focuses on improving parent-child interactions. In this area, the students vow they will be more understanding, less punitive, more encouraging, and less "old-fashioned."

Not surprisingly, the students contend that the parent-child issues they intend to handle better when they have families of their own are the very same points of contention which characterized disputes between the generations not only in 1983, but in 1974 as well.

As future parents, spouses, and employees, the students of the '80s are a determined lot; their intentions are to pursue an advanced level of education, carve out successful careers for themselves, marry, and raise their children with compassion and respect. They have few lofty notions about "changing the world," but have chosen instead to make contributions within the sphere of their own family, friends, and community.